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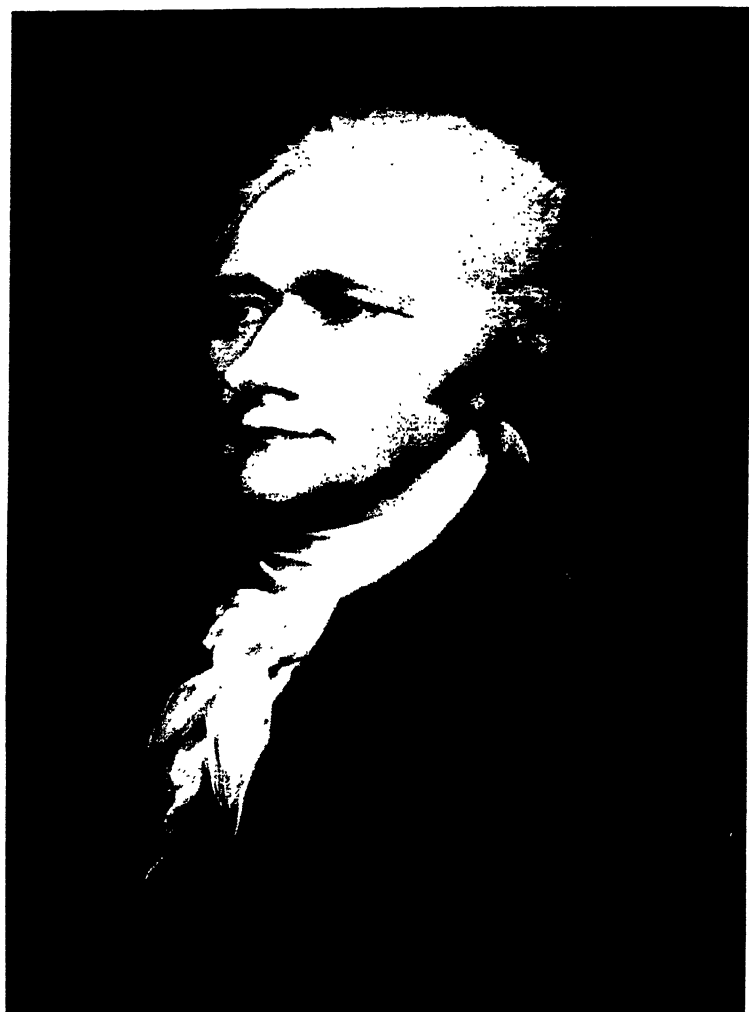




AN AMERICAN COLOSSUS  
The Singular Career of Alexander Hamilton







ALEXANDER HAMILTON  
From a painting by John Trumbull

# AN AMERICAN COLOSSUS

The Singular Career of Alexander Hamilton

BY

RALPH EDWARD BAILEY

*Illustrated From Photographs*



Instances of marvellous precocity are more often found in mathematics, or linguistics, or music, than in political science. . . . Seldom has there been such a case as that of Hamilton. His intellect seemed to have sprung forth in full maturity, like Pallas from the brain of Zeus.

JOHN FISKE

BOSTON

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AN AMERICAN COLOSSUS

*First printing, October, 1933*  
*Second printing, December, 1933*

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

*To the memory of  
my mother  
Mary Louisa Lambright Bailey  
and to my wife  
Julia Baynard Pickard Bailey*





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The author is under indebtedness to responsive friends for reading the manuscript of this biography, or for discussing with him, from time to time, pertinent matters concerning its subject. Also he has a deep sense of obligation to those who have previously written about Hamilton—many of them named in the bibliography. To a wife whose assistance in the work has been tireless and indispensable, he wishes that he

might suitably express thanks. He is grateful, in no small measure, to Mr. Warren F. Gregory, of Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., who brings to the editing of manuscripts the discrimination and learning of a scholar.

Mr. Kenneth McDougall, of Wellesley Hills, has greatly helped by his friendly interest and agency; and it is good fortune to have had the index prepared by Miss Mary Lucetta Allen, of Cambridge.

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This book purports to be a realistic presentation of a significant, dramatic life. In reporting Hamilton's career, I have definitely sought, according to the first canon of realism, to avoid the impressionistic way of the commentator and the advocate.

Lord Macaulay has said: "The business of the dramatist is to keep himself out of sight, and to let nothing appear but his characters." It has been prevailingly the aim, in the following pages, to narrate a drama and only sparingly introduce the writer's explicit criticism, favorable or adverse, of its main participants.

Discussion has done much to reveal—and also to obscure—the real Hamilton; but it seems true that to an unusual extent his disclosure is in his own words and deeds, and therefore that the factual sequence of his life affords the surest way of knowing him.

There are several exhaustive treatises on Hamilton's political philosophy and financial system; and his own *Report on the Public Credit* and *Report on Manufactures* are also available for those who would know in detail his theories and plans for building a nation. Only his main political purposes, and the chief aspects of his financial program, have I thought it feasible and appropriate to describe in a biography that represents an intention of giving the quintessence of what Hamilton

believed and said in the very many interesting situations of his remarkable life.

RALPH EDWARD BAILEY

*Cambridge*  
*Massachusetts*

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CHAPTER ONE  
PREVALENT AMBITION

“Myself, at about sixteen, came to this country. Having always had a strong propensity to literary pursuits, by a course of study and laborious exertion, I was able by the age of nineteen . . . to lay the foundation by preparatory study for the future profession of the law.”







## I

ALEXANDER HAMILTON'S father, though he spent most of his life in islands of the West Indies, was born in Scotland. When the fame of an eminent career in the United States aroused interest on the part of the Hamilton family in Scotland and brought letters from them, apparently the statesman learned, more fully than he had known before, how distinctly aristocratic was the course of his paternal ancestry.

His father was descended from the Hamiltons of Cambuskeith, who received their first royal grant from King Robert III, early in the fifteenth century. To Cambuskeith were added, by a charter of May 1588, the lands of Grange. In European works on Hamilton genealogy appears this description of the fourth son of Alexander Hamilton of Grange and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Robert Pollock: "James, a proprietor in the West Indies, and father of General Hamilton, the celebrated statesman and patriot in the United States, who fell, greatly regretted, in a duel with a Mr. Burr."

Not an eldest son, James Hamilton felt moved to quit Scotland in quest of opportunity and fortune. Having relatives there, he came to St. Kitts, a Leeward island of the Lesser Antilles. He was virtually as much at home in Nevis as he was in St. Kitts; for proximity

and identical characteristics made a single community of the two islands.

On February 5, 1740, the Nevis court had granted a divorce dissolving a wretched marriage—that of John and Mary Fawcett. She was a member of the Lytton connection in the West Indies; he, a physician, was of French birth and of the Huguenot dispersion. Rachael Fawcett, their vivid daughter, remained with her mother after the parental separation. When not older than sixteen, Rachael, at her mother's coercive instance, became the bride of John Michael Lavine, a rich Danish Jew of St. Croix. She was utterly unhappy in the marriage. Leaving her husband, she returned to Nevis and St. Kitts that she might resume life in the home of her mother. Her son, Peter Lavine, was retained by his father in St. Croix.

James Hamilton and Rachael Lavine loved each other and wished to be married. Insurmountable hindrances, however, precluded their becoming husband and wife. Though the law of the British provinces permitted divorce, it did not, except in cases of canonical disability, allow either party to marry again. In St. Croix, under Danish rule, the influential prominence of Lavine was such as to render futile any thought of a suit there. The lovers, thus prevented from the desired conventionality of a wedding, agreed in the establishment of a home without marriage.

To them was born, in Nevis, January 11, 1757, Alexander Hamilton, probably the younger of their two sons.

James Hamilton, who was a merchant, at about the

time of his second son's birth failed in business. It was decided that he should leave Nevis and St. Kitts, the scene of his ruined fortunes, and seek elsewhere a more prosperous career. Rachael would go to St. Croix, taking the children with her. On that island a number of her relatives lived, some of them wealthy. The anticipation was that a business recovery would soon bring the separated family together again.

Soon after Rachael's arrival in St. Croix, Michael Lavine was granted a divorce. The court gave him permission to marry again, but denied her that freedom. Lavine brought against his spirited young wife the charge that she had "absented herself." To these court proceedings, which were favorable to her only in acknowledging an escape she had already made for herself, she was indifferent. Her concern was centered in the hope that soon James's letters would announce that the time had come for their boys and her to go to a new home, in St. Vincent. When she died, February, 1768, she was still in St. Croix. She was thirty-two, and her youngest son, Alexander Hamilton, was beginning his twelfth year.

The record of her death appears on the Burial Register of St. John's Episcopal Church, Christianstadt, St. Croix. In the Protocol of the Christianstadt Dealing Court for the year 1768 there is an entry in which it appears that she left a few slaves to her Hamilton sons and that Michael Lavine claimed these for her "only lawfully begotten heir, Peter Lavine."

## II

In the year 1754, Hugh Knox, a young man of scholarly tastes and attainments, came to North America from Ireland. Near St. George, Newcastle County, Delaware, he established a classical school. Though, from his being somewhat grave in manner, his companions called him "parson," his consideration of the future included no intention of turning to the ministry. On a certain Saturday night—the story is—he offended his conscience by imitating, for the amusement of a hilarious crowd at a drunken tavern party, the preaching of a godly minister whom he and the other revellers, when sober, admired. His consequent remorse led him to religious reflections more serious than he had experienced before, and resulted in his deciding to elect divinity as his vocation. With the ministry in view he studied under the Reverend Aaron Burr, president of the College of New Jersey, later Princeton University.

While pastor of a Presbyterian church in St. Croix, Knox, still a young man, came to know Alexander Hamilton, and between the two a deep friendship was established. By directing the mental eagerness of a phenomenal boy, Hugh Knox gave his name an important place in history.

Until about a year after the death of his mother, Hamilton was sent to school by her relatives, with whom he lived. A kindly Jewess was his teacher, and throughout his life he had a clear memory of her lifting him, a small child, to a table by her side and having him repeat the Decalogue in Hebrew. His chief study

was French, a language in which his mother had given him early instruction. In the autumn of 1769 he was withdrawn from school and made apprentice in the counting-house of Nicholas Cruger, a rich merchant of St. Croix.

His precocity asserting itself, the boy Hamilton did amazingly well in the business position to which he had been assigned.

Soon, though he was then only fourteen, entire charge of Cruger's affairs was given him, the proprietor having gone away for improvement in health. The care of the business establishment involved difficult, important matters. These the youthful manager discharged with wisdom and success. He directed the transactions of Cruger's agents in distant ports; he ordered the arming of ships against possible attacks; he determined cargoes of imports and exports according to his judgment of business conditions; he decided when to buy and when to sell for foreign clients; he made bold and final recommendations on the basis of his discernment of the motives and characters of men. Cruger, recognizing his extraordinary ability, sent him to St. Eustatia and other places as commercial representative. This early business experience was excellent discipline for Hamilton, and such he reckoned it in the memories and throughout the years of his life.

But Cruger's remarkable apprentice did not feel that he had found, in the occupation of a merchant, his own calling.

His friend Edward Stevens was in New York at school, and to him Hamilton, while in his thirteenth

year, had written the famous letter telling of his aspirations. "As to what you say," he had declared, "respecting your having soon the happiness of seeing us all, I wish for an accomplishment of your hopes, provided they are concomitant with your welfare; otherwise not; though I doubt whether I shall be present or not, for, to confess my weakness, Ned, my ambition is prevalent, so that I condemn the grovelling condition of a clerk or the like, to which my fortune, etc., condemns me, and would willingly risk my life, though not my character, to exalt my station. I am confident, Ned, that my youth excludes me from any hopes of immediate preferment; nor do I desire it; but I mean to prepare the way for futurity. I'm no philosopher, you see, and may justly be said to build castles in the air; my folly makes me ashamed, and I beg you'll conceal it; yet, Neddy, we have seen such schemes successful when the projector is constant. I shall conclude saying, I wish there was a war."

Under the stimulating influence of the Reverend Hugh Knox, his scholarly friend, the ambitious youth gave unremitting attention to interests of the mind. Plutarch's *Lives* introduced him to a world with which he rejoiced to become familiar. Eagerly he learned of the great persons and achievements of antiquity and followed Plutarch in that writer's classical analysis and comparison of characters. Pope also strongly appealed to his mind and nature. Pope's intellect, like Hamilton's, was brilliantly mature before youth had passed, and Hamilton found in it a congenial source of inspiring delight. His marked talent for satire was trained



by Pope; later Hamilton made skillful use of the *Dunciad* in achieving discomfiture of political foes.

Edward Stevens, studying in New York, was intending to be a doctor, and Hamilton thought that perhaps his friend's calling would also be his. Chemistry therefore was included among the several studies which, under Knox's friendly tutelage, he pursued. Works on moral philosophy he read and pondered. His Scotch aptitude for logic and for all profound consideration found exercise in conversation with Knox on polemical themes. The minister realized that his young companion was intellectually able and advanced beyond his years, felt that Alexander Hamilton would be, somewhere, an outstanding man, and sought to encourage religious loyalties as the foundation of his pupil's character.

Hamilton's mental development came not through learning and converse only, but also through writing. His impressions of what he read, which he always analyzed, he often expressed on paper. He wrote of the biographies of Plutarch and of topics and problems relating to ethics. Knox, on seeing these compositions, found them excellent, and so became convinced that Hamilton's leading gift was for letters.

It happened that in August of 1772 a demolishing hurricane swept over the Leeward Islands. In St. Croix five hundred houses were blown down. Hamilton's description of the storm and its havoc, appearing in Thiboü's paper at Christianstadt, attracted attention and received much appreciative comment. It was promptly decided among his relatives and friends that

so talented and aspiring a youth should be given every advantage of education. Arrangements were made, therefore, to send him to New York that he might enter an adequate school.

Thus Hamilton's pen, which in time was to be mightier than any other in the land to which he was going, had opened the way to his "prevalent" ambition.

### III

On an October day of the year 1772, two lads from St. Croix, Edward Stevens and Alexander Hamilton, devoted friends, landed in Boston.

Hamilton was fifteen, and this was his first journey away from the West Indies. There had been a threatening fire aboard ship, but so quickened must have been young Hamilton's sense of adventure that the alarm could hardly have added to his excitement in the journey. He doubtless asked and heard again and again from Stevens all the features and details of the schools and advantages of the new world to which he was going.

Boston, then a community with a population of about 20,000, was a center of political revolt. Memory of the "Massacre" of 1770 was a lively indignation in the public mind. Lord North, in response to colonial nullification of the Townshend Acts, had issued his obnoxious dictum: "The properest time to assert our right of taxation is when the right is refused." Samuel Adams, the "Palinurus of the Revolution," was organizing citizens into vigilance committees, and elo-

quently speaking in tones of protest and leadership. Of all this excited state of things Hamilton, intuitive and observant, received his own impression as he went through Boston on his way to New York.

Knox, the faithful, expectant friend, knew many foremost people in the vicinity of New York, and to a number of them he had given Hamilton letters. The youthful stranger soon found himself, therefore, the beneficiary of the friendliness and direction of outstanding citizens. Among these were William Livingston and two celebrated ministers, Dr. John Rodgers and Dr. John Mason. In this circle of associates Hamilton met Elias Boudinot, an able lawyer, whose appreciation of the youth's interesting personality was immediate and helpful.

The advice of Hamilton's new friends was that he prepare for college by attending Francis Barber's school at Elizabethtown. The academy was new, having been founded only three years before; but its young principal, then twenty-one, a native of Princeton, held the confidence of Livingston and Boudinot, who gave his school their liberal patronage. The St. Croix boy who entered this American school in the fall of 1772, found there fellow students whose abilities stimulated his own extraordinary powers of mind.<sup>1</sup> Brockholst Livingston, whose career as a lawyer led him to a judgeship in the national Supreme Court, was with him in the daily classes; and so was Jonathan Dayton, later Speaker of the House of Representatives and, after that, Senator from New Jersey.

Always an aristocrat in temperament, from the time

of his introduction to his new setting Hamilton had the acceptable fortune of association with the kind of people he preferred. It was to him a delightful satisfaction to be the guest of the Boudinots and of the Livingstons. The pride and amplitude prevailing in their homes were congenial to his nature and aspirations. He could be happily conscious there of being in the midst of patroon society; for Schuylers, Van Rensselaers, Van Courtlandts, Stirlings came and were received as relatives and friends.

There was in these homes, also, that appeal of feminine charm to which Hamilton characteristically was responsive. The loveliness of Susan Boudinot, a small but piquant girl, gave what must have been to him a completing grace in the hospitality of her kindly parents. Daughters of the Livingston household, famous in all histories that report the social life of the nation, he found particularly engaging as companions and friends. Typical qualities among them made an interesting variety: Sarah was a sedate person even before she had increasing responsibilities as the wife of the ascending lawyer, John Jay; Susan was noted for good judgment and sound sense; Kitty, her cousin Elizabeth Schuyler's witty friend, delighted all her correspondents by being a gossip, and sometimes distressed her father by being a flirt.

But social diversion did not prevent Hamilton from making scholastic progress. His confident ambition, his love of learning, his desire to be independent of the provision of others, urged him on. The time he spent

at Barber's school was a period of resolute application. During the winter, wrapped in a blanket, he studied and learned until midnight; and when spring came, he would be out of the house at dawn, to renew, at the entering of day, his efforts with his books. Francis Barber was a good classical scholar, and under his tutelage the intellectual lad from the Islands rapidly increased his knowledge, particularly his knowledge of Latin and Greek.

At the end of a year at Elizabethtown, Hamilton believed that he was ready for college. His instructor and advisers agreed with him in this confidence, and a decision was reached that he should attempt the promotion.

Two colleges were available—King's, later Columbia, and Princeton. Hamilton's preference was for Princeton. That was, at least by local and religious loyalties, the college of the Livingstons and the Boudinots and of the two ministers to whose friendly interest he was indebted. Francis Barber had received his college training there, and Hugh Knox, the illuminating friend and companion of the St. Croix years, bore the stamp of the New Jersey institution. Elizabethtown, with whose tradition the young student had become familiar, had been the birthplace of Princeton College. There its students had gathered until its first master, Jonathan Dickinson, had died in the midst of his hopeful labors, and one of its trustees, the Reverend Aaron Burr, had been induced to take the college under his charge at Newark.

## IV

During Hamilton's school years, payment for his support came from the West Indies through a merchant named Mulligan, who was associated with the New York firm of Kortwright and Company. To meet the youth's expenses and keep him in funds, produce from his former home was consigned to this firm. A brother of the merchant's, Hercules Mulligan, in whose house the lad often stayed, came to have an almost worshipful affection for his gifted young friend from the West Indies. It was Hercules Mulligan who went with Hamilton to make application at Princeton.

The president of the college, Dr. John Witherspoon, examined the applicant and found him well prepared.

Then Hamilton with his usual audacious confidence made a surprising request. It was that he be permitted to surpass those with slower minds and finish the course without regard to the time usually required for the college training.

Dr. Witherspoon did not refuse this singular application, but he thought it should be referred to the Trustees. He was disappointed and regretful when the Trustees gave an adverse decision, for he felt "convinced that the young gentleman would do honor to any seminary."

King's College was the next choice. Its situation then was bounded by streets that were later named Church, Greenwich, Barclay, and Murray. The buildings were of stone, and were on three sides of a quadrangle that faced the North River. Comfortable apartments were

provided for the students, "each having," according to a contemporary description, "a large sitting-room, with a study, and a bed-chamber." The institution had been founded by George II, with a charter stating the King's object to be: "the . . . good design of promoting a Liberal Education . . . not only to the inhabitants of our . . . Province of New York, but to all our Colonies and Territories in America." A European visitor reported: "The college is established upon the same plan as that in the Jerseys, except that this at New York professes the principles of the Church of England."

There being no official objection at King's to Hamilton's plan for rapid progress, in the fall of 1773 he entered that college as a student.

Only a small number of teachers constituted the faculty. Dr. Myles Cooper, the president, taught Latin, Greek, English, and philosophy. Dr. Samuel Clossey, who had left a medical practice when he emigrated from Ireland, had the chair of anatomy. Dr. Peter Middleton, concerning whose will Hamilton and Aaron Burr were later engaged as opponents in a famous legal battle, lectured on chemistry. Dr. Robert Harpur, a Presbyterian from the North of Ireland, and formerly professor in the college, gave instruction as tutor in mathematics.

Hamilton, determined to be comprehensively educated, took all subjects. He had private lessons under Dr. Harpur, in whose book of accounts appears the record: "Sep<sup>r</sup>. 20<sup>th</sup>, 1774, Mr. Alex<sup>r</sup> Hamilton at £3 . . . 4 per Quar<sup>r</sup>, entered with me this day, to

study Mathem<sup>s</sup>." Still thinking that perhaps he should be a physician, he became a pupil in the medical school which, a part of the college, was taught by doctors of skill and reputation. It was not until the Revolution came, turning the thoughts of all to interests of citizenship, that he realized how peculiarly his nature inclined him to legal and political concerns.

Separated from the familiar setting of his childhood, and with his sense of being alone in the world intensified by removal to a distant place, in his student days the youth from the West Indies found a welcome support in religion. He remembered the faith and cherished the influence of his friend Hugh Knox. He was never morbid, however, and seldom grave; wherever he went, he was a lively presence. On visiting Mulligan's family he would write, that admiring friend reported, "doggerel verses for their amusement, and was always amiable and cheerful."

But though he did not, in the period of his stirring religious awareness, cease to be wholesome, he must have been a very devout lad. The Boudinots would sometimes have him offer prayer in their family devotions. When a small child of theirs died he wrote verses expressive of sympathy and religious faith. It was remembered that he composed, also, a devotional elegy on the death of a young lady of one of the families that had befriended him. An insight into the spiritual cast of his religious feeling is given by the title of a hymn he wrote: "The Soul Entering into Bliss." It was the memory of Robert Troup, his most intimate companion during college years, that he "was attentive to



public worship, and in the habit of praying on his knees night and morning." His deportment was such that he was never cited in Dr. Cooper's dreaded *Black Book . . . of Misdemeanors*. From having lived in the same room with him, Troup recalled: "I have often been powerfully affected by the fervor and eloquence of his prayers. He had read many of the polemical writers on religious subjects, and he was a jealous believer in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity." With Troup's reminiscence came the acknowledgment: "I confess that the arguments with which he was accustomed to justify his own belief have tended in no small degree to confirm my own faith in revealed religion."

Versatile in his interests and progress, Hamilton acquired from a junior debating society to which he belonged training that was as valuable to him as the discipline of college. It was the day of debating societies in America. Several principal cities had, as important features of community life, these clubs that existed for the controversial exchange of ideas on legal and other subjects. From them went forth a very determinative influence on public opinion. The society in Boston, organized by Jeremy Gridley, Attorney-General of the Crown, was called the Sodality; that in New York, also composed of successful lawyers and other prominent citizens, was named the Moot. The debating society of which Hamilton was a member, an organization mainly of college lads, reflected ambitious imitation of the Moot.

Among other members of the young men's club were Edward Stevens, Robert Troup, and Nicholas Fish.

They were Hamilton's closest associates during the time he was at King's College. His friendship with each of them remained affectionate and strong to the end of his days. All of the four ever looked back with happy recollection to the meetings and the fellowship of the college debating society.

And when Hamilton, the whole world beholding, was a chief builder in the establishment of a new government, Fish and Troup and Stevens were but confirmed in the opinion they had formed in the debating society of the days at King's. It was always their testimony that in the college debates "he gave extraordinary displays of richness of genius and energy of mind."

## V

In Batteau Street was an extended row of large trees; and under those trees, in the spring of 1774, a youth who was sometimes called the "Young West Indian" could be seen each day walking back and forth, his expression and aspect indicating concentrated thought. Those who passed him heard him talking to himself in an undertone. His mind, like that of every thoughtful person in the colonies, was experiencing the agitation of grave political issues.

Hamilton had been under strong influences from both sides of the rending controversy, the Tory and the Whig. His college was prevailingly Tory in loyalties and views. Dr. Clossey was so resentful of the Whig protests that he resigned his professorship and left America. Dr. Harpur's sentiments were with the Whig

policy of resistance, but Dr. Cooper, the president, was hotly for compliance with every British requirement. Under his leadership King's College was officially loyalist. But though Hamilton received instruction in a Tory college, he had numerous friends and companions who were Whigs.

William Livingston, whom he much admired, was a leader among those of Whig convictions. Uncompromising in his stand against having a bishop in America, the Jersey leader resolutely concurred in Samuel Adams's determination: "Such an establishment will never take place. . . . The revenue raised in America for aught we can tell may be as constitutionally applied toward the support of prelacy as of soldiers and pensioners." Livingston had written a pamphlet which set forth colonial politics in the light of the need of resistance. He frequently contributed to the *American Whig*, an organ of protesting opinion, in the columns of which, as early as 1768, the prophetic statement had appeared: "The day dawns in which the foundation of this mighty empire is to be laid, by the establishment of a regular American Constitution."

Hamilton, moreover, had by chance been given opportunity to learn directly, from personal report and association, that colonial resentment was not limited to the North and East. Washington had brought his stepson, John Parke Custis, up to New York to attend King's College; and the youth from Virginia could tell of the patriotic meetings of Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, Dabney Carr, and Thomas Jefferson in the Raleigh Tavern at Williamsburg. Since he had but

lately come from Mount Vernon, young Custis could vividly report what the effect had been upon the people of the Old Dominion when Lord Dunmore, in the spring of 1773, had dissolved their House of Burgesses.

On one of his walks under the trees in Batteau Street, Hamilton probably saw a printed announcement of a public meeting to be held on Wednesday, July 6, 1774, "in the Fields." The notice was conspicuously and generally posted, and handbills were in distribution throughout the city.

Back of the call for that meeting were important events. Parliament, urged by an irate, obstinate king, had voted to move the Massachusetts commercial capital from Boston to Salem, and to close the Boston port. From Boston, in consequence of this summary action, a circular letter promptly went out to all the colonies, asking for a common stand against commerce with Britain. On May 17 the express bringing that letter arrived in New York. The communication was referred to a Committee of Fifty-one citizens, chosen to lead in matters of public exigency and defense.

The New York Committee, on May 23, did what was likewise done by eighty-nine burgesses of Virginia four days later—it urged the assembling of a Congress of representatives from all the colonies. Having made that recommendation, it nominated delegates to the proposed Congress, and called a meeting for July 7, at which further action should be taken. But this Committee, notwithstanding these steps of quick aggressiveness, was known to be somewhat conciliatory in senti-

ment, and there were radical Whig leaders who feared its conservatism.

By Tories these radical leaders were called the "Presbyterian Junto," and among them were the lawyer, John Morin Scott, and the merchants, Alexander Macdougall and Isaac Sears. It was the "Presbyterian Junto" that issued the announcement of the public meeting to be held on July 6 in the Fields north of the city. The date, preceding that which the Committee had named for its meeting, was chosen in accordance with the radical leaders' purpose that there should be a popular expression to warn the conservative temper of the Committee before the 7th, its intended time for conclusive determinations.

On July 6, an earnest multitude assembled in the Fields.

Alexander Macdougall presided at the meeting. His very presence was enough to stir the hearts of all who were opposed to aggressive measures against liberty. When, in 1769, the New York Assembly, controlled by a Tory majority, had voted a supply to the British troops, Macdougall had issued a resounding address: *A Son of Liberty to the Betrayed Inhabitants of the City of New York*. The Assembly promptly found the address "an infamous and seditious libel,"—Philip Schuyler alone voting in the negative,—and sent Macdougall to jail. After a tedious imprisonment he was released, but not before the despotic treatment of him had given the Whig cause the strongest encouragement it had yet received. Meetings of citizens drank to him as the "John Wilkes of America," and then marched to

the jail to honor him. The prison became a center to which fashionable ladies, resentful of tyranny, thronged. Songs, written to suit the case, were sung under the barred windows where the brave man was confined. And he, not silenced, addressed the people through the press, defiantly reinforcing the indictment the publication of which had deprived him of his freedom by causing his arrest.

Hamilton, deeply interested in the critical situation of public affairs, was present at the meeting in the Fields.

Speakers were discussing and advocating a draft of resolutions that condemned the Boston Port Act, urged a general refusal to have economic commerce with Great Britain, pledged the colony to accede in the measures of the proposed Congress, called for subscriptions against the needs of the patriotic exigency in Massachusetts, and demanded a generally representative convention for the election of the delegates from New York.

Comments of approval and disapproval of what was being proposed were expressed to one another by persons in the crowd. Several of those near Hamilton, struck by the pointed relevance of remarks the occasion was evoking from him, urged him to give a public utterance to his ideas. At first the flattering importunity only humbled him to silence, but the inadequacy of the speeches so called to his confidence in himself and to his deep interest in the issues of the hour that before the meeting was over he went forward and stood before the thronging citizenry. A spirit of wonder came over

the people as they saw that a youth, slight of form and boyish in appearance, was to be the next speaker.

Momentarily, the lad of seventeen could neither think nor summon words. Fear possessed him as he saw the multitude of the waiting assemblage. Then confidence, which was too integral a part of his being to be ever long absent, came back to him, and he began to speak to his hearers with the convincing power of logical, earnest thought. The issues of which he spoke and the response of the listeners gave such an emotional quickening to his imagination that before he had finished he was using the language of the orator and the poet. "Waves of rebellion," he said, "will soon, sparkling with fire, wash back to the shores of England the wrecks of her glory."

At the conclusion of his speech and before the sound of applause, through the astonished audience went the whisper, "It is a collegian! It is a collegian!"

## VI

The measures of the First Continental Congress, which sat from September 5 to October 26, 1774, in Philadelphia, though immediately having the approval of large numbers of inhabitants of the colonies, sharply displeased two elements of the population. These were the Tories and the radical Whigs. For the former, the measures were too drastic; for the latter, too mild. But they were not mild; rather they were, on the whole, peremptory.

The first act was a Declaration of Rights which set

forth grievances and violations lately inflicted by Parliament. This was followed by an Address to the People of Great Britain, a Petition to the King, and other pronouncements. Also there was a vote that the citizenry be asked to comply with a patriotic Association against having, after a specified time, commercial relations, either of importation or exportation, with Great Britain, Ireland, and the West Indies. Before adjournment a resolve was passed that, unless a change should meantime come in the attitude of Parliament, there be another Congress in May of the next year. It was these measures, adopted by delegates variously but soberly chosen from the different provinces, that elicited from Chatham, speaking in the House of Lords, the praise: "I must declare and avow . . . that for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion under a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the General Congress in Philadelphia."

Among those who, loyal to Britain, were indignant over the spirit and temper of the congressional proceedings, none was more resentfully stirred than the Reverend Samuel Seabury, of Westchester County, New York.

Learned, eloquent, resolute, Seabury was rector of St. Peter's Parish, having been appointed by Sir Henry Moore and inducted by Dr. Myles Cooper. His leadership was outstanding and his influence was strong. Mainly attributable to his insistent protests was the refusal of the New York Assembly, in 1775, to approve and adopt what had been done by the Congress. Mount-



ing his horse he rode over the county—his writings report—and assembled “near four hundred friends of government at the White Plains, who openly opposed and protested against any congress, convention, committee.” Some time before this, according to his written account, he had entered into “an agreement with the Rev. Dr. T. B. Chandler, then of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, and the Rev. Dr. Inglis, the rector of Trinity Church, in the city of New York, to watch all publications, either in newspapers or pamphlets, and so obviate the evil influence of such as appeared to have a bad tendency, by the speediest answers.”

Faithful to this compact with his friends, Seabury, the community astir over pamphlets and articles discussing the critical stage of affairs, wrote a tract, in November, 1774, *Free Thoughts on the Proceedings of the Continental Congress*. This Tory pamphlet, signed “A. W. Farmer,” at once arrested general attention. It was the work of a master, both able and practised as to the skill he was using. Those who were loyal to the congressional position dreaded the effect of the attack that had come from this competent adversary to their cause.

Hamilton, then in his eighteenth year, read with mature understanding the comprehensive argument of the alarming pamphlet.

His own pen had not been idle since he had come to America. Aside from his religious verses, he had, while at Barber’s school, composed a play which was performed by a number of British officers; and for more than a year he had been contributing to Holt’s *Journal*.

In that paper he had published arguments against Tory views and, using a pseudonym, had readily engaged in a political disputation with Dr. Cooper, his college president. He had written, also, an essay in defense of the renowned destruction of tea. Now that there was an urgent sense of need of an adequate, discomfiting answer to the "Farmer," the scintillating collegian's awareness of youth did not prevent him from attempting the task of making the required reply.

Within a few weeks his rejoining pamphlet appeared, bearing, without signature, the title and announcement: "A Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress from the Calumnies of their enemies, in answer to a letter under the signature of a Westchester Farmer; whereby his *sophistry* is exposed, his *cavils* confuted, his *artifices* detected, and his *wit* ridiculed, in a General Address to the inhabitants of America, and a Particular Address to the Farmers of the *Province of New York*. Veritas magna est et prevalebit—Truth is powerful and will prevail."

The young champion based his defense on the proposition that the stand taken by the Congress was not only "reconcilable to the strictest maxims of justice" but was also such as to receive "the sanction of good policy." To justify any measure as good policy, he argued, "three things are requisite." These three tests, in his clear definition, were: "First, that the necessity of the times requires it; secondly, that it be not the probable source of greater evils than those it pretends to remedy; and lastly, that it have a probability of success."

With undeviating logic and cumulative force the lad

demonstrated that these tests were met by the commercial resistance which the Congress had recommended. Was the proposed expedient necessary? To that question he answered: "We are threatened with absolute slavery. It has been proved that resistance by means of REMONSTRANCE and PETITION would not be efficacious, and, of course, that a restriction on our trade is the only possible method in our power to avoid the impending mischief. It follows, therefore, that such a restriction is necessary."

Would the commercial resistance cause greater evils than those it sought to remedy? Respecting that formidable query Hamilton offered two prophetic assurances. "It would be a hard, if not impracticable, task," he said, "to subjugate us by force." He furthermore declared: "We can live without trade of any kind. Food and clothing we have within ourselves. . . . If, by the necessity of the thing, manufactures should once be established, and take root among us, they will pave the way still more to the future grandeur and glory of America; and, by lessening its need of external commerce, will render it still securer against the encroachments of tyranny."

What was the probability of success? Showing a thorough knowledge of the economic resources and commercial needs of the nations of the world, Hamilton concluded: "The attention of Great Britain has hitherto been constantly awake to expand her commerce. . . . One of the principal branches of her commerce is with the colonies. . . . Nor can it be reasonably imagined, that the total and sudden loss of so

extensive and lucrative a branch would not produce the most violent effects to a nation that subsists entirely upon its commerce."

It is an evidence of the versatility of the young writer that when he presented the argument to the farmers, addressing them as "My Good Countrymen," he completely changed style.

In his appeal to the farmers he became simple, direct, colloquial. As if one of them, he discussed matters of what they should plant and of the prudent care of flocks. For their amusement he made broad fun of the pamphlet he was subjecting to refutation: in referring to Parliament, he said: "Nay, I don't know but they would find means to tax you . . . for every kiss your daughters received from their sweethearts; and, God knows, that would soon ruin you." That he might enlist it on his side, he adroitly called to class prejudice. "The sort of men I am opposing," he wrote, "say . . . that you are so ignorant as not to be able to look beyond the present. . . . This is the character they give of you. . . . For my part I will never entertain such an opinion of you, unless you should verify their words, by willfully falling into the pit they have prepared for you."

Before Hamilton's response appeared, the learned Seabury was writing another pamphlet, *The Congress Canvassed; or, An Examination into the Conduct of the Delegates at their Grand Convention . . . addressed to the Merchants of New York*. In an appendix, having meanwhile read *A Full Vindication*, he invited his opponent to make reply within ten days, and said

that he would answer both of his rejoinders at once. There was manly praise in his statement of being sure that the ten days would be "full time enough for so very accomplished a writer."

But Hamilton thought it poor strategy to write again, in advance of a reply to his argument already published. He would wait. His waiting was not long, however, for directly the "Farmer" published another general letter: *A View of the Controversy between Great Britain and her Colonies, including a Mode of determining the present Disputes*.

Hamilton's answer, *The Farmer Refuted*, an argument in over 35,000 words, published in a pamphlet of 78 pages, gave evidence of historical learning and of power ably to discharge the exactions of sustained argumentative dissertation on difficult themes. Appraising *The Farmer Refuted*, the quick work of a youth who was just eighteen, George Shea, an erudite critic, referring to Hamilton's use of history in the argument, has declared: "In exactness, fullness, and pertinency, as a practical exposition of this part of the case, it is even more satisfactory than the similar history of the Colonies which Edmund Burke gives in his famous speeches on American Taxation and Conciliation with America."

\* John Jay, then in his thirtieth year, was recognized as one of the best political writers of the day. His reputation in this respect was scarcely below that of his wife's father, William Livingston. Jay's fame had been enhanced by his services in the Congress of 1774, where,

as a member of a committee of three, he led in the authorship of the Address to the People of Great Britain. When the pamphlets answering the "Farmer" appeared, there was, in the common realization of their intellectual merit and the Whig gratitude for their ample defense, much speculation relative to their anonymity. The general opinion was that the author was either Livingston or Jay. Dr. Cooper was among those who attributed the writings to Jay.

Hercules Mulligan soon dispelled the uncertainty. Hamilton had read the manuscripts to him at his home in Water Street: he and Troup, who shared the college room in which the writing was done, knew the answer to the question that was prominent in many minds. Proud of the accomplishment of his brilliant young friend, Mulligan could see no need of continued reticence and so let the secret out. Dr. Cooper, however, shook his head when he heard the disclosure. Troup found that "he had no doubt the answers were from Jay's pen; and he ridiculed the idea of their having been written by such a stripling as Hamilton."

It has been said by George Ticknor Curtis that these pamphlets by a college lad showed a "great maturity,—a more remarkable maturity than has ever been exhibited by any other person, at so early an age, in the same department of thought."

Seabury's appeal "to the Merchants of New York," contained in his tract *The Congress Canvassed*, did not go without a reply from his resourceful young oppo-

nent. The merchants, vitally concerned over the issue of severing commercial relations, called a convention at the Coffee House. Hamilton, his mind replete with facts and arguments relating to the subject, was present. Being diminutive in stature,—“under middle size, thin in person,”—when he decided to speak he stood on a chair. There was none of the fear that had at first incapacitated him when he appeared before the throng in the Fields. Since then he had done further thinking on questions of government and trade. He knew, moreover, from his experience in Cruger’s counting-house, the mind and problems of merchants. This, a selected group of significant men, was the kind of audience to which Hamilton’s abilities as a speaker were best suited. In the accents of oratory, therefore, he answered the “Farmer” as effectively as he had done through the printed arguments. Edward Lawrence, a prominent merchant who was at the convention, said, with an enthusiasm which made his report a tradition of his family, that the eloquence of Hamilton’s speech at the Coffee House was persuasive and electric.

From Marinus Willett, a supporter of the congressional measures, there is on record, concerning the disputation between the lad of genius and the “Farmer,” this report: “Sears was a warm man, but with little reflection; Macdougall was strong-minded, and Jay, appearing to fall in with the measures of Sears, tempered and controlled them; but Hamilton, after these writings, became our oracle.”

## VII

By his very temperament a believer in the importance of maintaining the legal orderliness of society, Hamilton was always hostile to anarchic behavior on the part of individuals or of mobs. In times when excited passions ran to cruelty and injustice, he invariably argued and strove for proper, decent conduct. It was but characteristic of him, therefore, that he, with Troup, one day in the early part of the year 1775, stood on the steps of the college and, urging against violence, held back a mob that had come to seize Dr. Cooper, the Tory. He was not deflected when Dr. Cooper, mistaking his intentions, from an upper window cried out to the threatening crowd: "Don't listen to him, gentlemen, he is crazy." He kept his ground until the president made escape. In a similar incident he protected also a respectable merchant, Thurman, who had incurred the mob's wrath.

In the autumn of that year, Seabury, honest in his Tory sentiments,—later, after the Revolution, as "Samuel of Connecticut" the first bishop resident in America,—was brutally treated by Captain Isaac Sears and a company of Connecticut men he commanded. Riding up to the rectory, "they beat his children," the minister reported, "to oblige them to tell where their father was," and having searched the neighborhood and taken Seabury from his school, they sent him under guard to New Haven, where for six weeks he was confined and persecuted. Sears and most of his men, having proceeded to New York, assailed James Rivington, the



printer, whose loyalties—though from his press had come pamphlets of both sides—were known to be with the Anglicans and the Tories. They rifled his types and printing materials and, in valorous elation, rode back to Connecticut.

To Hamilton these things were an outrage. He wrote to Jay: "I take the liberty to trouble you with some remarks on a matter which to me appears of not a little importance; doubting not that you will use your influence in Congress to procure a remedy for the evil. . . . In times of such commotion as the present, while passions of men are worked up to an uncommon pitch there is danger of fatal extremes. . . . In such tempestuous times, it requires the greatest skill in the political pilots to keep men steady and within proper bounds, on which account I am always more or less alarmed at everything which is done of mere will and pleasure without any proper authority."

Jay at once communicated to Nathaniel Woodhull, President of the Provincial Congress of New York, the sentiments of Hamilton's remonstrance, and that Congress sent a letter to Jonathan Trumbull, Governor of Connecticut, protesting against the behavior of Sears as an invasion of their "essential rights as a distinct colony," and reprehending the severity used towards Seabury as likely to "subject to misconstructions prejudicial to the common cause."

Jay watched Hamilton's development with alert interest. On December 5, 1775, from Philadelphia, where he was attending the Second Congress, he wrote Macdougall: "I hope Mr. Hamilton continues busy. I have

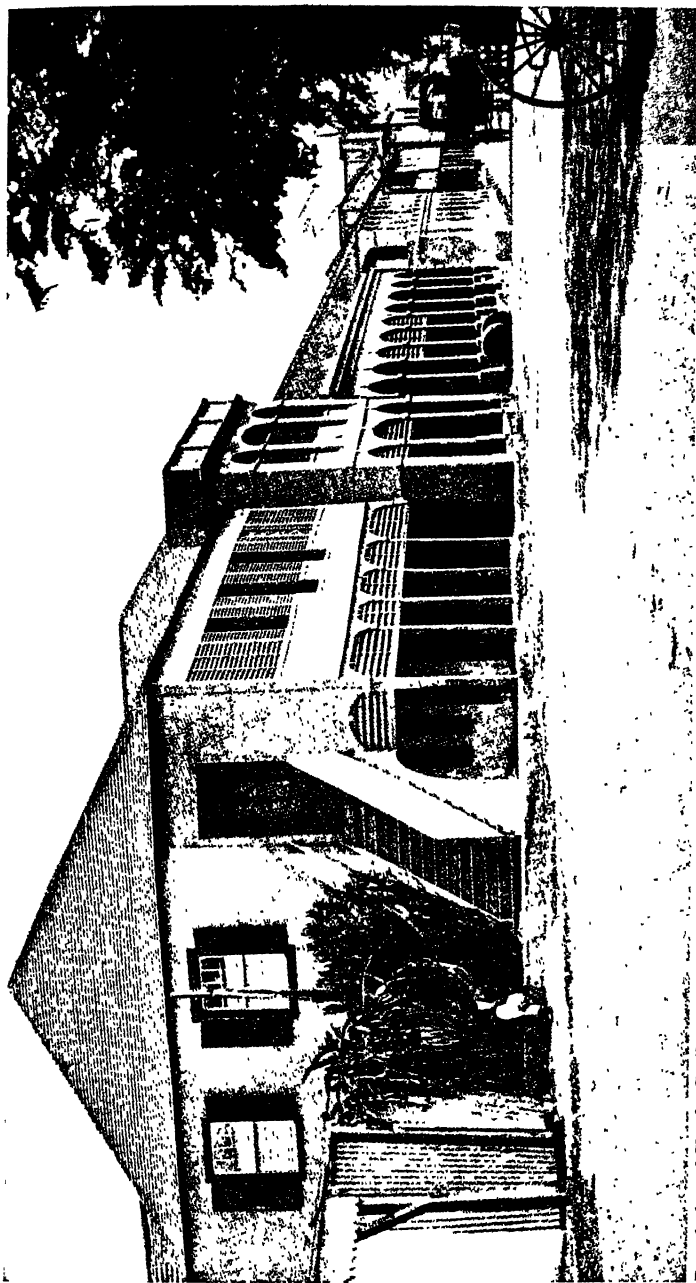
not received Holt's paper these three months, and therefore cannot judge of the progress he makes."

Busy indeed was the astounding youth. To voice the general patriot resentment he had written his *Remarks on the Quebec Bill*. In the two papers of the *Remarks*, he had argued forcefully against the British measure by which the Ministry had sought to evoke quiescent ghosts of old religious and racial animosities between the French of Quebec and the inhabitants of the colonies, and had added to the Canadian province the region between the Ohio and the lakes.

While Hamilton was producing political articles and tracts, he was also, with his natural avidity, reading many books. It was a new field to him, that of military science, narratives of campaigns, rules of arms; but he was mastering it with the sure quickness which was made possible by the wonderful strength and capacity of his mind.

A number of young patriots in New York had begun to meet together for military practice. Hamilton and his companions were among the group. When, in the summer of 1775, men of Governor Tryon's ship *Asia* fired on Captain John Lamb's company and received a fire in return, the collegians were stanch and serviceable in the midst of the terror caused by the *Asia's* immediate and repeated shots into the town.

Richard Montgomery's soldiers, in the heroic attack on Quebec, December 31, 1775, wore in their caps, that they might recognize one another, pieces of white paper upon which were written the words, "Liberty



*Permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.*

THE HOUSE WHERE HAMILTON BEGAN HIS CAREER, WEST END, ST. CROIX



or Death"; and the group of young men in New York, organizing themselves into a volunteer military company, placed that device on the hats they wore. They drilled each morning in the churchyard of St. George's Chapel, Beekman Street. Major Fleming, who had been an adjutant in the British army, was engaged to train them. Hamilton, as described from a conversation with one who knew him, was "a small, lithe figure, instinct with life, erect and steady in gait . . . his general address . . . indicating the beauty, energy, and activity of his mind"; and he must have been fine to see in the company's uniform, which Willett remembered as consisting "of a green coat, trimmed with silver twist, white under clothes and black gaiters; also a cocked hat, with a large black cockade of silk ribbon, together with a silver button and loop." The company took for its name the title of David Garrick's stirring Revolutionary ballad, "Hearts of Oak."

In the spring of 1774, the last Commencement held by King's College assembled in Trinity Church. Governor Tryon was awarded an honorary degree. Not until April 1776, however, was there the virtual end of the college activities. Then it was that the Committee of Safety required the buildings and turned them into a hospital. The students were dismissed, and the library and the apparatus were stored in the City Hall.

Hamilton, seeing that his college attendance would be thus terminated, had wondered whether he should return to St. Croix. He had been sent away for schooling, and now his school course was to be at an end. He

must have felt himself, in a sense, an alien in a remote community. But he had become loyally interested in the American cause, and his judgment of the issues involved had been thoughtfully formed. In describing himself as the author of the answers to the "Farmer," he had truly said: "His political opinions have been the result of mature deliberation and rational inquiry. . . . Because he remembers the time when he had strong prejudices on the side he now opposes." His friends in St. Croix, particularly Hugh Knox, were wishing success to the contention for American freedom. He had faithful, dear friends in the new scene: Troup, Fish, Willett, Mulligan, Dr. Mason and Dr. Rodgers, the Boudinots, the Livingstons.

He had made progress in the new land since that October day when he landed in Boston. In three years and a half he had passed from being an unknown West Indian boy to the standing of recognized leadership in the guidance of social forces indicative of a new political era. At thirteen he had wished "there was a war"; now, at nineteen, that wish, as ardent as before, was to have fulfillment. Considerable achievement already to his credit, the opportunity of the immediate future both calling and smiling, it is not surprising that he had decided to stay.

## CHAPTER TWO

### GOOD AUSPICES

“The American Revolution supervened. My principles led me to take part in it; at nineteen, I entered into the American army as captain of artillery. Shortly after I became, by his invitation, aide-de-camp to General Washington.”





## I

ON January 6, 1776, the Provincial Congress of New York voted an order for augmenting its military establishment by raising a company of artillery. Macdougall, colonel of a regiment in New York City, recommended Hamilton in connection with the proposed command.

There were those, however, who thought that the applicant, aged nineteen, probably had no knowledge of the science of artillery warfare. Macdougall, knowing what his friend's studies were and had been, suggested an examination, and was not surprised that the test resulted in a certificate of competency. A few days later, March 14, Hamilton was commissioned "Captain of the Provincial Company of Artillery." Mulligan helped him recruit his men, and subsequently recorded that Hamilton "with the remnant of the second and last remittance which he received from Santa Cruz, equipped them."

Receiving information that the men of the Continental artillery were getting more pay than those of his company, and finding that there was a similar disparity in the matter of rations, Hamilton immediately wrote the Provincial Congress of New York two dignified, clear letters of complaint. "Our company, by their articles, are to be subject," he said emphatically, "to the

same regulations, and to receive the same pay, as the Continental Artillery."

The Congress rectified the conditions he thus brought to their attention, and also responsively treated a recommendation he made in a third letter to them. This advice related to the fact that there was an official vacancy in his company, "arising from the promotion of Lieutenant Johnson to a Captaincy in one of the Gallies." Urging the 'innovation of elevating worthy men from the ranks, Hamilton went on to say: "I beg the liberty *warmly* to recommend to your attention Thomas Thompson . . . a man highly deserving of notice and preferment. He has discharged his duty in his present station with uncommon fidelity, assiduity, and expertness. He is a very good disciplinarian . . . and will not disgrace the rank of an officer and gentleman."

The Congress appointed Thompson to the lieutenancy, and in so doing adopted a new policy for the selection of officers. It was ordered that this action be given widest publication throughout the province and within the army. The Provincial Congress wanted all to know that opportunity for promotion was open to merit.

Just after Hamilton took charge of the artillery company, he received, from Gen. William Alexander, called Lord Stirling, an overture that strikingly indicated esteem. General Alexander, who claimed the earldom of Stirling, and whose wife, Lady Kitty, was sister to William Livingston, had been given command of the patriot forces at New York. Knowing of Hamilton's

talents and wishing to have such abilities on his staff, he asked Elias Boudinot to present the offer. The answer was conveyed in the following letter from Boudinot:

MY LORD: On my brother's return from New York, he informed me that Mr. Hamilton had already accepted the command of artillery, and was therefore deprived of the pleasure of attending your Lordship's person as brigade major.

The British having evacuated Boston, March 17, 1776, Washington proceeded straightway to New York to meet the expected attack of Howe upon that city. Hamilton and his men were well prepared for the place they were to have in the army of the great Virginian. General Greene, passing through the park, was, according to his grandson, impressed by "the soldierly appearance of a company of young artillerists, and particularly by the air and bearing of their commander, who, though but a boy in size, went through his duty with the precision of a veteran."

In the records of that course of battling which began with the defeat at Brooklyn and ended with the victory at Princeton, the remarkable young captain left a number of creditable and significant impressions.

After the disaster at Brooklyn, the Americans made a retreat to Harlem Heights. Scott's brigade, to which Hamilton's company was attached, remained at its post on the East River until the British were entering the city, and then made its escape by taking the Bloomingdale road around to Harlem. At that place Washington, inspecting activities of fortification, was favorably in-

terested by an earthwork that Hamilton had planned and was superintending. The Commander expressed to the captain his approving notice; and thus occurred the historic incident of their first meeting and conversation.

Though the battle of Harlem Heights was an American victory, within a few days subsequent to the engagement Washington found it necessary to remove to a new position. His communications at Harlem were threatened by Howe, who had sent a force through Hell Gate into Westchester County. For a part of the army the decampment from Harlem was to White Plains, or Chatterton's Hill, and in the course of this removal Hamilton met Aaron Burr.

An aide to General Putnam, Burr was a magnetic young officer of whom there was lively appreciation. The grandson of Jonathan Edwards, he represented the best tradition and inheritance of New England. Already he had distinguished himself, not only by his phenomenal record as a student at Princeton but also in the gallant expedition of Montgomery and Arnold against Quebec.

Beneath a manifest similarity, there was fundamental unlikeness between Burr and Hamilton; and on the occasion of their first meeting they seemed to experience a reciprocal aversion out of which, report says, came an exchange of "angry words."

During the battle of White Plains a crisis arose in which the issue depended on the action of Hamilton and his company. A battalion of Hessians and a British brigade had been ordered to attack the Americans

on Chatterton's Hill. When this advancing column reached the Bronx they found the stream swollen by recent rains, and so refused to wade it. Plans were at once in operation for a temporary bridge. Macdougall ordered Hamilton to frustrate the undertaking. This the captain did by planting his two fieldpieces on a ledge of rock, screened by a covert of trees, and opening fire. The resulting consternation amongst the Hessians delayed construction of the bridge, and gave Washington time for arranging his forces against the assault.

Cornwallis in pursuit, the Americans, unequal in strength, retreated from town to town through New Jersey. Well in advance, during this retreat they had not been disturbed by the enemy when they reached New Brunswick. There, as the rear of their forces crossed the Raritan, the van of the British appeared and began firing. Washington stood on a high point of the river's bank, anxiously observing the advantage of the enemy troops. But the fieldpieces of Hamilton, as soon as the river was crossed, had been placed in position on the heights of the town, and from them went forth a cannonade that checked the attack until the falling of night made possible a decampment for Princeton. Washington, impressed by the forethought and skill displayed by the young captain of the protecting artillery, ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Fitzgerald to learn his identity and bid him come to headquarters at the next halt.

"Well do I recollect the day," said one who was there, "when Hamilton's company marched into Princeton. It was a model of discipline; at its head was a boy, and

I wondered at his youth; but what was my surprise when, struck with his slight figure, he was pointed out to me as that Hamilton of whom we had already heard so much." Another observer received and remembered this impression of him: "I noticed a youth, a mere stripling, small, slender, almost delicate in frame, marching beside a piece of artillery, with a cocked hat pulled down over his eyes, apparently lost in thought, with his hand resting on a cannon, and every now and then patting it, as if it were a favorite horse or a pet play-thing."

Having restored the courage of despondent patriotism by the victorious Christmas surprise at Trenton, and having eluded Cornwallis by leaving the campfires burning while the American army marched away in the night, Washington, entering Princeton the second time, took the place from the enemy force that had been stationed there, and then, January 5, 1777, established winter quarters at Morristown. Hamilton and his company were among the veterans of the heroic campaign. At the battle of Princeton, he had, according to Trevelyan, "with the irreverence of a student fresh from a rival place of education, planted his guns on the sacred grass of the academical campus, and fired a six-pound shot, which is said to have passed through the head of King George the Second's portrait in the chapel."

## II

Closer observation in the encampment at Morristown confirmed and heightened the favorable opinion

Washington had formed of the artillery officer who had drawn his attention at Harlem and again at the crossing of the Raritan.

In the wisdom and character of General Greene the Commander had all confidence, and he saw that between Greene and Hamilton there was a trusting friendship. He learned, moreover, that Hamilton was the author of a letter received by him before the battle of Brooklyn, a letter containing much sound judgment regarding the possibilities and hazards of the situation then about to be faced.

Needing the services of an additional secretary, and insistent upon having in his official family only dependable, competent men, on the 1st of March, 1777, Washington appointed Hamilton, who had just turned twenty, aide-de-camp with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

Others on the staff at that time were Robert H. Harrison, Tench Tilghman, and Richard K. Meade. To Harrison, the "Old Secretary," fell the task of writing most of the General's letters of routine. His discharge of this duty was creditable, though performed in a style somewhat prolix and inadvertent. Tilghman's writing resembled, in its directness, the bare simplicity that marks a mere outline. Soon it came to pass that Hamilton was charged with composing the more important official communications. Of these, during the period of his service as aide, he wrote more than a thousand. Troup's loyalty did not cause him to exceed prevailing sentiment, when he wrote: "The pen of our army was held by Hamilton; and for dignity of man-

ner, pith of matter, and elegance of style, General Washington's letters are unrivalled in military annals."

Hearty and abiding friendship united the colleagues of the official family. Lafayette, who from close association knew Washington's staff well, said there was never an instance of quarrelling or disagreement among them. Harrison, moved by admiring devotion, was the first to call Hamilton the "Little Lion," a term which adhered through the succeeding years.

Within a week after his appointment to Washington's staff, Hamilton wrote to the New York Provincial Convention resigning his company and saying: "The Continent will readily take it off your hands so soon as you shall determine to relinquish it." His anticipation of the Convention's action in the matter was fulfilled, and with its order to transfer the company came a request that he correspond with a committee,—Gouverneur Morris, Robert Livingston, and William Allison,—in order to transmit to New York information and advice concerning military affairs.

Hamilton accepted the proposal, but he did so with the definite understanding that the opinions expressed to the committee were "never to be interpreted as an echo of those of the *General*." The invitation was an honor, and the way in which the discerning youth discharged its terms markedly increased his prestige.

In a notable series of letters he kept the New York Convention apprised of the facts and probabilities of events. The inferences he furnished he drew by the processes of his quick but confident logic: when, for example, it seemed that the enemy did not aim at tak-



ing Philadelphia he said, "For my own part, though I am staggered in my conjectures, yet I by no means give up my first supposition." After Howe had moved toward the south and taken Philadelphia, there was remarkable similarity between the history of his operations and the forecast of them that Hamilton had made in his letters to the New York committee.

It was from a very natural impulse that in a letter sent to St. Croix the proud little officer told Hugh Knox, his beloved companion of former years, the news of his promotion.

Knox was thrilled and elated. Replying, he said he had been telling his associates that he expected, if Hamilton survived the campaign and found leisure to write letters, "a more true, circumstantial, and satisfactory account of matters . . . than by all the public papers and private intelligence" received on the island. "*Mark this,*" he urged; "you must be the Annalist and Biographer, as well the Aide-de-camp, of General Washington—and the Historiographer of the AMERICAN WAR."

The Congress that adopted the Declaration of Independence called upon the respective colonies to form governments appropriate to the new situation of freedom from British control. There was an immediate response to this call: one by one a number of the States established independent constitutional governments. On April 20, 1777, the New York Constitution was adopted. John Jay, Robert Livingston, and Gouverneur Morris were its framers. Morris sent Hamilton,

then in his twenty-first year, a pamphlet containing this Constitution, and requested his opinion of the new government.

In his reply—which contained only qualified praise of the work done by Morris and his colleagues—young Hamilton won the admiration of many political scientists of the future, by making, in succinct form, a valuable statement of what is generally regarded as the essential principle of free government. “A representative democracy,” said he, “where the right of election is well secured and regulated, and the exercise of the legislative, executive, and judiciary authorities is vested in select persons, chosen really and not nominally by the people, will . . . be most likely to be happy, regular, and durable.”

### III

In the fall of 1777 Washington desperately needed more men for his campaign against Howe, who occupied Philadelphia. The British strength was overwhelmingly greater than his. Washington's only available recourse was that of getting an addition to his army from the forces at the North. There seemed no proper hindrance to his receiving the reinforcements, for with the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga, on October 17, the military exigency of that region had been largely relieved. A Council of War was called, and it was decided to bring forces from the northern troops, mainly from the command of General Horatio Gates, to strengthen the army under Washington.

Immediately the Commander-in-Chief selected Colonel Hamilton for the requisite mission.

The service asked was responsible and difficult. Instructions for it had to be indefinite, for conditions at the distant post were not thoroughly known. Several members of Congress being in a mood to minimize his authority, Washington, in planning what he would communicate to Gates, was not disposed to issue, save as a last resort, a specific command. Gates, in consequence of his decisive victory at Saratoga, was full of a glorying spirit of universal superiority. His reputation, particularly in New England, had become a chorus of acclaim. Already Thomas Conway was whispering to him the stealthy but glamorous prediction that he should and would have Washington's place. Gates having once served in the English army, people were saying that for Commander the colonies needed a man of experience in European tactics of warfare. In Congress there was a considerable faction desirous of making the victor over Burgoyne the chief general of the American cause.

In the instructions furnished to Hamilton the Commander appeared as almost a suppliant. He wanted twenty regiments, specifying those he desired. Some of these, he indicated, Gates had sent to Putnam, who, because of Clinton's late withdrawal, no longer needed them. In approaching the victorious general at the North, the envoy was "to point out to him the many happy consequences" that would arise from "an immediate reinforcement being sent from the northern army." If it should be found that Gates, "in conse-

quence of his success," was planning "to employ the troops under his command upon some expedition, by the prosecution of which the common cause" would be "much advanced," he, the envoy, if in his judgment the project seemed fairly promising, was not "to give any interruption to the plan." But if it should appear that Gates had nothing in mind except to wait opportunity for further enhancement of his own fame, then Hamilton was to inform him that it was Washington's "desire that the reinforcements before mentioned . . . be immediately put in motion to join the army." It was indeed a delicate embassy, having scope for discretion, but little forthright power for procuring its imperative ends.

The Commander's representative went first to the headquarters of General Putnam at Fishkill. There he found that a council had just made plans to send reinforcements to Washington. These plans Hamilton mainly endorsed, though giving directions that the intended numbers be somewhat increased. Then, fresh horses provided for him, he rode on to Albany to see General Gates.

A letter from Washington, relative to the mission, had preceded the envoy. After offering congratulations on the triumph at Saratoga and expressing regret that "a matter of such magnitude" should have reached him "by report only, or through the channel of letters not bearing that authenticity which the importance of it required," the Commander had said: "From Colonel Hamilton, you will have a clear and comprehensive view of things; and I persuade myself you will do



*Photograph by Brown Bros.*

MRS. ALEXANDER HAMILTON  
(*Elizabeth Schuyler*)

From a painting by R. Earl



everything in your power to facilitate the objects I have in contemplation."

Hamilton, in audience with the mighty Gates, found himself confronted with an attitude of firm and haughty opposition.

Gates declared that he did not concur in Washington's judgment concerning the disposition of the troops, and that he intended to send only one brigade. The young envoy, regarding as baseless the reasons for this refusal, argued his case, bringing earnestly into use all the persuasive resources at his command. But the argument was without effect. It produced not even a step toward compliance.

Hamilton was by nature quick to anger, and in this exasperating case he found restraint of himself almost impossible. He knew, however, that to offend Gates, then the lauded idol of thousands, would jeopardize his own future, the reputation of Washington, and the cause of freedom. Therefore he did not rebuke or command with the authority he ultimately had by his commission. Accepting what Gates offered, he ended the interview without having dropped the mild politeness which, under the conditions, he thought wise. It was a trying experience for him, and relating it he wrote to Washington: "I cannot forbear being uneasy lest my conduct should prove displeasing to you, but I have done what, considering all the circumstances, appeared to me most eligible and prudent." Intending to offset, as much as possible, the failure in dealing with Gates, he sent a letter to Putnam asking that the reinforcements from Fishkill be forwarded "with all dispatch."

But when Hamilton learned that the one brigade Gates was about to send southward was by far the weakest of his entire command, meekness was instantly thrown aside.

Gates received a letter from him that was both ex-coriating and peremptory. "When I preferred your opinion to other considerations," said Washington's envoy, "I did not imagine you would pitch upon a brigade little more than half as large as the others; and finding this to be the case, I indispensably owe it to my duty to desire, in his Excellency's name, that another may go instead of the one intended, and without loss of time. As it may be conducive to dispatch to send Glover's brigade, if agreeable to you, you will give orders accordingly."

Gates, upon consideration, gave orders to send two brigades instead of one.

On his return from Albany, Hamilton learned that the plans previously made at Fishkill were in disappointing confusion. "I am pained beyond expression," he wrote to Washington, "to inform your Excellency that on my arrival here I find everything has been neglected and deranged by General Putnam. . . . I wish General Putnam was recalled from the command of this post. . . . I am very unwell; but I shall not spare myself to get things immediately in a proper train."

Enlisting the coöperation of others, he succeeded in forwarding southward the required troops, and then after a briefly alarming condition of acute illness, there were long, impatient weeks of continuing fever and pain. But the hardship of enforced absence from head-



quarters was alleviated by his receiving from Washington, in a note concerning the Gates mission, this assurance: "I approve entirely of all the steps you have taken."

## IV

The critical tribulation of the winter at Valley Forge, 1777-78, was only intensified by the Continental Congress.

After immortalizing itself in the grandeur of the Declaration of Independence, that body, through the withdrawal of many of its ablest members, suffered a melancholy deterioration. Most of the men of talents had taken office in their respective States, or were in the army, or were abroad on missions of diplomacy. Washington observed this congressional decadence with apprehensive regret, and in a letter to George Mason he said: "I lament the fatal policy of the States of employing their ablest men at home. How useless to put in fine order the smallest parts of a clock, unless the great spring which is to set the whole in motion is well attended to! Let this voice call forth you, Jefferson, and others to save their country."

Concerning this condition of neglect and indifference, the ardent Hamilton was fairly ablaze.

Writing to Governor Clinton, he deplored "having a Congress despised at home and abroad," and advertising to the fall from previous glory, asked: "The great men who composed our first council; are they dead, have they deserted the cause, or what has become of them?"

On several scores Hamilton blamed Congress.

It had abetted the "Conway Cabal" which sought to depose Washington, and that connivance the patriotic young officer despised. About Conway he declared: "He is one of the vermin bred in the entrails of his chimera dire, and there does not exist a more villainous calumniator and incendiary." Congress had violated the Saratoga agreement by which Burgoyne's surrendered army was to have been returned to England, and stigmatizing that betrayal Hamilton said: "These men seem also to have embraced a system of infidelity." He justly censured the Government, furthermore, in connection with the "complaints from the whole line of having been three or four days without provisions." Branding it "*a brat of faction*," he vigorously reprehended the plan, established by Congress, that made, he said, "the Inspector independent of the Commander-in-Chief."

Although willing to acknowledge his rebuking comments about "a certain synod," Hamilton was sure he had *not* said, at a public coffee house in Philadelphia, "that the army would, by-and-by, turn their arms upon the country and do themselves justice," and "that it was high time for the people to rise, join General Washington and turn Congress out of Doors." In the summer of 1779, Colonel John Brooks of Massachusetts gave Hamilton the report that Francis Dana was intimating that he believed the rumor of the rebellious incident and seditious remarks. Hamilton at once wrote to Dana, who replied, in effect, that he had only

discussed, without any expression respecting its probability, an account that had come to him through the Rev. Dr. William Gordon, of Jamaica Plain. Gordon, then engaged in writing a History of the Revolution, was an Englishman who, in 1770, had come to America. He had been chaplain of the Provincial Congress in Massachusetts until that body had dismissed him, "as the Legislature"—says one of his biographers—"regarded his prayers as intended rather to dictate their measures than to implore the divine direction on them."

Hamilton summarily required of Gordon his authority for the damaging charge.

Gordon's response was oblique and evasive; out of poor reasons for secrecy he made a shield for an alleged informant, and then offered the concession: "I do not imagine he would object to it, but whether he do or not, shall mention him, upon your assuring me upon your honor, that you will neither give nor accept, cause to be given nor accepted, a challenge upon the occasion, nor engage in any recounter that may produce a duel. . . . You must further assure me, that you will admit of the matter's being thoroughly examined into by Congress, or individuals of the first character."

To the first of these stipulations Hamilton, though with protestations against the custom of the duel, replied: "The crime alleged to me is of such enormity, that if I am guilty it ought not to go unpunished, and, if I am innocent, I should have an opportunity of vindicating my innocence." To the second condition he answered: "Whenever I have it in my power to con-

front my accuser, I shall take care to do it in the presence of witnesses of the first respectability, who will be able from what they see and hear, to tell the world that I am innocent and injured and that he is a contemptible defamer."

The clerical historian having refused to yield, Hamilton drew what seemed to him to be the inevitable conclusion. "The unravelment of the plot in the ridiculous farce you have been acting," he wrote Gordon, "proves, as I at first suspected, that you are yourself the author of this calumny. Such I consider you, and such I shall represent you." Arrival at this verdict was facilitated by the receipt of a letter in which Colonel David Henley, of Massachusetts, said: "I do think Col. Hamilton you will find Doctr. Gordon the cause of this mischievous and false Report—the other day he was prov'd a Lyar in the publick Street, and had it not been for his Cloth, I am sure would have been more severely dealt with—he more than once has occasioned Quarrels by his Conduct."

It was regarding a congressional scandal which stirred the entire country that Hamilton's eloquent antagonism against legislative sins reached its climax.

In 1778, while the darkest period was still upon the patriot cause, the charge was out that Samuel Chase, of Maryland, one of the signers of the Declaration, was making, to enrich himself, guilty use of his influence and information as a member of Congress. Specifically, the allegation was that when General Wadsworth, the Commissary-General, was projecting arrangements for

the purchase of flour, Chase had induced a committee of Congress to obstruct the buying—while he, for private gain, formed a monopoly and outrageously raised the price.

Hamilton believed that there was no room for doubt concerning the occurrence of the infamy. Moral abhorrence and vital interest in the public good moved him, therefore, to take up his pen. Under the signature "Publius," he wrote two letters for the *New York Journal*, in which he relentlessly pursued the object of punishing a malefactor. He did not name Chase as the villain of the piece, but he stated that the offender was a member of Congress and he explicitly described the crime.

The open letters were addressed to *The Honorable —, Esq.* "You have the merit," Hamilton said in the first letter, "of . . . discovering that, notwithstanding our youth and inexperience as a nation, we begin to emulate the most veteran and accomplished states in the art of corruption. You have shown that America can already boast at least one public character as abandoned as any the history of past or present times can produce."

It was in the second letter, however, that the writer, then in his twenty-second year, most clearly manifested the promise of becoming a dreaded and invincible master in the literary warfare of a succeeding period. In that letter, with superb effectiveness, he drew the portrait of an ideal statesman and subjected the man he was addressing to the deadly comparison. "The station of a member of C—ss," said Hamilton, "is the most

illustrious and important of any I am able to conceive. He is to be regarded not only as a legislator, but as a founder of an empire." Then, pointing the loathsome contrast, the writer remarked: "You will not be at a loss, sir, in what part of this picture to look for your own resemblance; nor have I the least apprehension that you will mistake it on the affirmative side. . . . Content with the humble merit of possessing qualities useful only to yourself, you will contemplate your own image on the opposite side with all the satisfaction of conscious deformity."

## V

John Laurens was the handsome, courteous darling of the army. His father, Henry Laurens, was, even before his distinction of arrest on a diplomatic mission and consequent imprisonment in the Tower of London, a conspicuous leader in Continental affairs. Being in England at the time of the attack on Fort Moultrie, the younger Laurens had returned at once to his home, South Carolina, to be a soldier in the war for freedom. In 1777, he and other Carolina officers went North in response to the opportunity of serving for a time under Washington. The General soon received him into the official family as an aide.

Of about the same age, Hamilton and Laurens were congenial from their first meeting, and their liking for each other became one of the strongest and most appealing friendships of history.

On the day before Christmas Eve, 1778, Hamilton attended Laurens in a duel with General Charles Lee.

The affair was in consequence of Lee's reprehensible conduct at the battle of Monmouth. Lee, a faithless European soldier of fortune, was tried by court-martial and found "guilty of disobedience of orders in not attacking the enemy; of misbehavior, by making an unnecessary and disorderly retreat; and of disrespect to the Commander-in-Chief." The court suspended him from his command, and Congress confirmed the court's action.

The convicted officer did not act with dignity under the reprimand. He was as meanly vindictive in the publications that issued from him and in his indiscriminate talking as he was in the letter he wrote to Aaron Burr: "As you are so kind as to interest yourself so warmly in my favor, I cannot resist the temptation of writing you a few lines. . . . As I have no idea that a proper reparation will be made to my injured reputation, it is my intent . . . to resign my commission, retire to Virginia, and learn to hoe tobacco, which I find is the best school to form a consummate *general*. This is a discovery I have lately made."

Hamilton and Laurens had both been at Monmouth—each having had his horse shot under him. They had witnessed Lee's treacherous behavior and they knew the condemning facts. In a letter to Elias Boudinot, describing the battle Hamilton wrote: "What think you now of General Lee? Whatever a court-martial may decide, I shall continue to believe and say,—his conduct was monstrous and unpardonable."

Laurens urged his friend Hamilton to write an open reply to "Lee's infamous publication." His urging was

mixed with modesty and, also, praise. "I do not think," he said, "that I can rely upon my own . . . style to answer him fully. . . . The pen of Junius is in your hand." The dignity of Washington's silence, however, had the effect of forbidding members of his military family from taking public notice of Lee's miserable attacks.

But the young Carolinian could not rid himself of the feeling that his Commander's honor ought to be vindicated. He was not satisfied with letting the case remain as it was. So Lee got a note from him, delivered by Hamilton.

It was the second challenge the insulting general had received within a short time. The first had come from Hamilton's admiring friend Baron von Steuben. A copy of his challenge to Lee and of Lee's answer to it the Baron had sent to Hamilton, who in replying commented: "Considering the pointedness and severity of your expressions, his answer was certainly a very modest one, and proved that he had not a violent appetite for so close a *tête-a-tête* as you seem disposed to insist upon."

Lee, though having declined the summons of the veteran, accepted that of the youth from Carolina. The duel was fought "near the four-mile stone on the Point-no-point road," in the afternoon at half-past three. Pistols were the weapons, and Lee was slightly wounded. After one exchange of shots the affair was terminated upon insistent recommendation of the seconds, Major Edwards and Colonel Hamilton. Their report of the encounter, written by Hamilton, was: "Upon the whole



we think it a piece of justice to the two gentlemen to declare, that after they met their conduct was strongly marked with all the politeness, generosity, coolness, and firmness that ought to characterize a transaction of this nature."

## VI

At the time of the mission to Gates, Hamilton visited General Philip Schuyler at his hospitable mansion in Albany. Elizabeth, the second daughter of the Schuyler family, born in the year of Hamilton's birth, was then at home, and the young officer from Washington's camp was introduced to her.

The Schuylers had wealth and high position. By long heritage they represented the aristocracy of New York. They were altogether of the social class that Hamilton found particularly agreeable. He enjoyed being received by the family, liked the magnificence of the house, and increasingly admired its owner. Philip Schuyler was worthy of admiration. A leader in the preliminary agitation toward freedom, during the war he was a chivalric soldier and a generous contributor to the cause.

During the winter of 1779-80 the Schuylers occupied a house at Morristown, where, the second time, Washington maintained headquarters. The prospect of American victory being somewhat more hopeful than it had been in the previous instance, Morristown was made the center of a brilliant, convivial season.

Many interesting persons were in town or within the vicinity. The William Livingstons were at their

splendid new home, Liberty Hall, in Elizabethtown. The young women of that family, and General Schuyler's daughters, and Susan Boudinot, were ever ready to participate with Lady Kitty Stirling in arranging delightful occasions for the military staff. Mrs. Washington had left Mount Vernon for the winter and was in Morristown. She was happy with her husband—and her knitting—in the Jacob Ford home, a substantial house on the Newark turnpike.

Hamilton, though laden with delicate, serious duties, did not neglect the enlivening pleasures of the routs and balls. Alexander Graydon, who had entered camp after being eight months a prisoner of the British, saw in Washington's aide only light and sparkling qualities. "Here, for the first time," he later wrote, "I had the pleasure of knowing Colonel Hamilton. He presided at the General's table, where we dined; and in a large company in which there were several ladies, among whom I recollect one or two of the Miss Livingstons and a Miss Brown, he acquitted himself with an ease, propriety and vivacity, which gave me the most favorable impression of his talents and accomplishments—talents, it is true, which did not indicate the solid abilities his subsequent career has unfolded, but which announced a brilliancy which might adorn the most polished circles of society."

The interesting young officer of Washington's military family was attractive not only in manner and spirit but also in appearance. "His complexion," said a writer who had seen him, "was exceedingly fair, and varying from this only by the almost feminine rosiness of his

cheeks. His might be considered, as to figure and color, an uncommonly handsome face. When at rest, it had rather a severe and thoughtful expression; but when engaged in conversation, it easily assumed an attractive smile."

Nurtured by a mother whose breeding was reminiscent of France, having a natural aptitude for the punctilious requirements of courtly relationships, Hamilton, using with complete ease the French language, was singularly felicitous in dealing with influential representatives of the country that early joined with America in hostilities against Great Britain. His service in this respect was recognized as creditable and important.

When, for example, Lafayette returned from France with news of the coming of the French fleet and the army of Rochambeau, the obliging colonel of the staff sent a letter to James Duane, a member of Congress, in which he urged: "The Marquis has a title to all the love of all America; but you know he has a thousand little whims to satisfy; one of these he *will have* me to write to some friend in Congress about. He is desirous of having the captain of the frigate in which he came complimented; and gives several pretty instances of his punctuality and disinterestedness. He wishes Congress to pass some resolutions of thanks. . . . The *essential* services the Marquis has rendered America in France give him a claim for all that can be done with propriety."

When M. de la Luzerne, French minister to the United States, arrived from abroad, Hamilton said in a

note to Baron Steuben, who led forth a welcoming party of cavalry: "The General requests you will make his respectful compliments to your Chevalier, and gives you *carte blanche* to say every handsome thing you think proper in his name of the pleasure which this visit will give him."

In Luzerne's honor a ball was later given at the Morris Hotel by the Washingtons and others of the official family. "Never had I seen," declared Judge Ford, "anything half so attractive as that brilliant array of beauty, dresses, and movements of the dance."

It was in 1778-79 that all the main points of defense in Georgia were captured—Savannah, Sunbury, and Augusta falling into the hands of the British. Charleston and South Carolina were then the next objectives for attack, and accordingly Sir Henry Clinton and Lord Cornwallis departed southward to achieve the subjugation. John Laurens immediately got leave from his post with Washington and hastened to the defense of his native State. During the Carolinian's absence, Hamilton kept him apprised of events at the North. But in one of the letters that went southward from headquarters, there were romantic paragraphs gayly irrelevant to the stern affairs of war.

Hamilton, then not quite twenty-three, had for four years held an earnest decision not to marry. In his sacred remembrance of his mother, "as a woman of superior intellect, highly cultivated, of elevated and generous sentiments," he could not have escaped re-

calling the tragedy matrimony had brought to her, and also the similar, mutual unhappiness of her parents. Accordingly, he had resolved against marriage. But in December 1779, he temporized with this resolve in the sentimental, jesting strain of his letter to Laurens.

In connection with a polite reference to the wife of his friend, he said: "I empower and command you to get me one in Carolina. . . . Take her description—she must be young, handsome (I lay most stress upon a good shape), sensible (a little learning will do), well bred (but she must have an aversion to the word *ton*), chaste, and tender (I am an enthusiast in my notions of fidelity and fondness), of some good nature, a great deal of generosity (she must neither love money nor scolding, for I dislike equally a termagant and an economist). In politics I am indifferent what side she may be of. I think I have arguments that will easily convert her to mine. As to religion a moderate stock will satisfy me. She must believe in God and hate a saint."

Whether or not he knew that he was doing so, in composing this picture Hamilton was drawing from life; and his model was Elizabeth, General Schuyler's daughter. His letter, with its reference to a distant scene, was the last, futile defense of a determination against her charms. She accepted his proposal, and their engagement, becoming known, was the subject of much delighted interest. Among the felicitating expressions, none could have been more hearty, or more rhetorical, than was that of Kitty Livingston. "If you should see the Col.," she wrote, "present my compliments and tell

him I hope to see him on the banks of the Hudson near Claremont where Flora shall mix his Laurels with Flowers and Pomona heap him with fruit."

It was characteristic of Hamilton that when deeply engrossed he was susceptible to lapses of memory. One night as he was returning to camp from the Schuyler home, he forgot the countersign and was kept back by a sentinel until a friend arrived and reminded him of the needed word. On the theme of Elizabeth Schuyler's singular and disconcerting fascination he expressed himself in a letter to her sister Angelica, Mrs. Church. "In short she is so strange a creature," he said, "that she possesses all the beauties, virtues and graces of her sex without any of those amiable defects, which from their general prevalence are esteemed by connoisseurs necessary shades in the character of a fine woman. . . . She has had the address to upset all the wise resolutions I had been framing for more than four years past, and from a rational sort of being and a professed contemner of Cupid has in a trice metamorphosed me into the veriest innamorato."

CHAPTER THREE

PATROON CONNECTIONS

"In the year 1780, I married the second daughter of General Schuyler, a gentleman of one of the best families of this country, of large fortune, and no less personal and political consequence. It is impossible to be happier than I am in a wife."





## I

**D**URING the time in which he was courting Miss Schuyler, Hamilton produced two papers which had decided importance as sources of political influence and as an indication of his rapidly developing capacity for statesmanship.

The first of these distinguished compositions, written in November or December of 1779, was a letter to a member of Congress, probably Major-General John Sullivan. Whatever may have been his reasons for doing so, the author, acknowledging his wish to be anonymous, concealed his identity under the name, "James Montague, Esquire."

The communication dealt with a subject of crucial interest—Continental finance.

• That year the state of American currency, having become steadily worse from the time of the first issue of bills, in 1775, was in extremes of failure. There was an emission of 140 million, which, with what had preceded it, had a current value of less than two and a half cents on the dollar.

There had been resort to various expedients in an effort to sustain the domestic paper money. In the several methods used, the common aim was that of appreciating the currency by an enforced reduction in the prices of commodities. Embargoes against the exportation of goods; impressment of supplies, for which the

owners were paid in currency at a rate fixed by law; public determination and enforcement of a scale of prices—all these means had been employed. But the value of the currency did not rise.

The only possible remedy for the situation seemed to lie in obtaining a foreign loan. For such aid, Benjamin Franklin had opened negotiations in France. But how could the loan best be used to improve the condition of the currency in the United States? That question was a call to thought.

• Hamilton pondered the matter, and—his genius for finance emerging—conceived a plan. In his letter of November 1779, he skillfully unfolded his proposal.

“How this loan is to be employed,” he said, “is now the question; and its difficulty equal to its importance. Two plans have been proposed: one, to purchase at once, in specie or sterling bills, all superfluous paper; and to endeavor . . . to hinder its returning into circulation. . . . The other plan proposed is to convert the loan into merchandise, and import it on public account.” Then, making an early contribution to a movement that resulted in the establishment of the Bank of Pennsylvania, in 1780, and the Bank of North America, in 1782, and the Bank of the United States, in 1791, the future financier declared: “The plan I would propose is that of an American bank, instituted by authority of Congress. . . . This loan is to be thrown into the bank as part of its stock. . . . A subscription to be opened for two hundred millions of dollars. . . . It is not, perhaps, absolutely necessary that the sum subscribed should be so considerable as I have

stated it, though the larger the better. It is only necessary it should be considerable enough to engage a sufficient number of the principal moneyed men in the scheme."

The second of the two important letters from the astonishing young man of twenty-three was written, September 3, 1780, to another member of Congress, James Duane, respecting the condition of government.

Although Congress, in November, 1777, had recommended the adoption of the Articles of Confederation, not all the States had yet, in 1780, complied. In August of that year a Convention from New England States, held at Boston, resolved for "a Congress competent for the government of all those common and national affairs which do not nor can come within the jurisdiction of the particular states," and proposed a subsequent, more inclusive Convention, to meet at Hartford. Duane, with this posture of affairs in mind, requested of Hamilton his ideas of the situation and its true requirements.

By the response he made to Duane's inquiry, Hamilton established for himself the signal distinction of having been the first to propose, directly to official consideration, the plan of an energetic Constitutional Government for the United States.

In prefacing his celebrated letter he deprecated the Articles of Confederation as "defective . . . neither fit for war nor peace," and, asserting that they gave "the power of the purse too entirely to the State Legislatures," declared: "That power which holds the purse-

strings absolutely, must rule." His drastic and forthright recommendation was that of "calling immediately a Convention of all the States, with . . . proper authority to give efficacy to the meeting." Discussing the urgency of the existing situation, he said: "The Convention should assemble the first of November next. The sooner the better. Our disorders are too violent to admit of a common or lingering remedy." It was his firm opinion that the Convention should institute a Confederation decidedly stronger than that then in process of being accepted—a Confederation giving "Congress complete sovereignty, except as to that part of internal police which relates to the rights of property and life among individuals, and to raising money by internal taxes," and also providing "certain perpetual revenues."

Having declared that "Congress is, properly, a deliberative corps, and it forgets itself when it attempts to play the executive," Hamilton urged the appointment of "the following great officers of State: A Secretary of Foreign Affairs, a President of War, a President of Marine, a Financier, a President of Trade."

Early in the year 1781, Congress, with Hamilton's friend Duane serving on the initiating committee, began to establish executive departments and elect men to fill them. Robert Morris became Superintendent of Finance; Robert Livingston, Secretary of Foreign Affairs; Benjamin Lincoln, Minister of War; Alexander Macdougall, Secretary of the Marine.

But the Convention, the calling of which Hamilton

was the first to advise, was delayed until 1787, when it met at Philadelphia.

## II

In September, 1780, Washington went to Hartford for a conference with the Count de Rochambeau and other French officers. Among those accompanying him on the journey were Lafayette, James McHenry, and Hamilton. On the return from Connecticut, Washington and his suite spent the night of September 24 at Fishkill, intending to reach West Point the next morning. Benedict Arnold had been given, in response to his sinister importunity, charge of that strategic position of American defense. He was living in the stately home of Beverly Robinson, who, twenty-two years before, in New York, had occasioned a romance by introducing his friend Washington to the exquisite Mary Philipse. Remaining loyal to the Crown, Robinson had become an officer in the British service.

Following an earlier message that Washington and his party would breakfast with him, the two aides, McHenry and Hamilton, were sent ahead to tell Arnold that the Commander-in-Chief had been delayed and would not arrive in time for the morning meal.

As Arnold received the Commander's officers and sat at table in characteristic hospitality, his composure was perfect. The knowledge that after months of furtive communication with Robinson, Clinton, and André, he had just sold West Point to the British and, by André, sent them the secret plans, though it must have

been uppermost in his mind, caused no deviation from his usual manner of entertainment and address. His conversation with Washington's aides was free from any embarrassment or restraint. Calmness on the part of the host was still maintained when a messenger entered and delivered to him a letter reporting André's arrest. Saying to his guests that he must make preparations for the reception of Washington, he withdrew for conversation with Mrs. Arnold in her apartment. She, though a Tory, had not known of her husband's collusion with the British. He quickly told her of his plight and, leaving her in a swoon, started for the British sloop of war, the *Vulture*.

Several hours after Arnold had galloped away, a second message, the delivery of which was subsequent to the arrival of Washington, disclosed the treason. Hamilton and McHenry were sent to intercept the fugitive; but when, at Verplanck's Point, they approached the water's edge, Arnold had reached the *Vulture* in a barge. It seemed to Hamilton that West Point was probably in danger of attack that very night. Accordingly he assumed authority, and ordered Greene and Meigs to be in readiness to reinforce the garrison.

The anguish of Arnold's beautiful wife was for Hamilton a baffling ordeal. He cringed before the raving in which she accused Washington and his military family of being in a plot against the life of her child. He implacably detested Arnold for having caused this lovely woman such convulsive grief. Trying to console her, he found that her fears were beyond the reach of any promising thing he could say: she was sure the

country would punish her and her child for Arnold's guilt. Hamilton wished he were a brother that he might the better be her defender; but she dismissed all his proffers of assistance. He was mystified when it began to appear that her concern regarding her husband related to his welfare, not to his crime, and that all her feelings were being resolved into love of the man who had fled.

Less complex than his sympathy with Mrs. Arnold was his distress over the misfortune of André. He was aware of immediate friendship with the talented Englishman. In many respects the two young officers were alike: both were personally attractive, had polite manners, knew the delight of intellectual interests, and were accorded enviable standing in military circles. Hamilton saw André overtaken by a desperate experience, and profoundly he admired the manhood revealed by the test. Describing to Laurens the plea from André to Washington, he showed respect, if not advocacy, in the paraphrase: "that he had been involuntarily an impostor; that contrary to his intention, which was to meet a person on neutral ground, he had been betrayed within our posts, and forced into the vile condition of an enemy in disguise."

André asked Hamilton to make in his behalf a request of Washington for permission to send an open letter to Clinton. "There is only one thing," declared the prisoner, "that disturbs my tranquillity. Sir Henry Clinton has been too good to me; he has been lavish of his kindness. I am bound to him by too many obligations, and love him too well, to bear the thought that he should reproach himself, or that others should re-

proach him, on the supposition of my having conceived myself obliged, by his instructions, to run the risk I did. I would not for the world leave a sting in his mind that should embitter his future days." Then, with irrepressible emotion, André indicated the concession he desired. "I wish," said he, "to be permitted to assure him I did not act under this impression, but submitted to a necessity imposed upon me, as contrary to my own inclination as to his orders." Washington acceding, the letter was written. Hamilton, writing to Laurens, praised it "both for its diction and sentiment."

All efforts were tried by the British to save the condemned officer. It was urged that his negotiations with Arnold should be regarded as tantamount to an interview under a flag. But André, himself, repudiated that plea on the ground of its being absurdly false. From the American side the suggestion came of exchanging the prisoner for the traitor. The proposal was made to Hamilton that he present the suggestion to André for his consideration. Hamilton refused, declining the risk of forfeiting André's respect by bringing to his attention the possibility of a resort to military irregularity as a means of escape. "I confess to you," Hamilton told Miss Schuyler, "I had the weakness to value the esteem of a dying man, because I revered his merit."

On the day he was put to death at Tappan, André sent Washington the following letter:

Buoyed above the terror of death, by the consciousness of a life devoted to honorable pursuits, and stained with no action that can give remorse, I trust that the request I make of your Excellency, at this serious



period, and which is to soften my last moments, will not be rejected.

Sympathy towards a soldier, will surely induce your Excellency, and a military tribunal, to adapt the mode of my death to the feelings of a man of honour.

Let me hope, sir, if aught in my character impresses you with esteem towards me, if aught in my misfortunes marks me as the victim of a policy, and not of resentment, I shall experience the operations of these feelings in your breast, by being informed that I am not to die on a gibbet.

The request of the convicted soldier was not granted; but Hamilton urged compliance and deplored the refusal. "When André's tale comes to be told," he wrote Miss Schuyler, "the refusing him the privilege of choosing the manner of his death will be branded with too much obstinacy."

### III

It was against the advice of Washington that, in 1780, Gates was given command in the South. Charles Lee and Gates being alike disgruntled, between them went back and forth the letters of a sinister, woeful correspondence. In one of his letters to his friend, Lee referred to Washington as "our Great Gargantua, or Lama Babak"; in another instance he gave the warning: "Take care that your Northern laurels do not change to Southern willows."

Lee's foreboding came true at Camden. As if the disgrace of unnecessary defeat there were not enough, Gates scandalized the country by his ignominious

flight for personal safety. "Was there ever an instance of a general running away, as Gates has done, from his whole army?" asked Hamilton in evident glee, writing to Duane. "And was there ever so precipitate a flight? One hundred and eighty miles in three days and a half. It does admirable credit to the activity of a man at his time of life. But it disgraces the general and the soldier." To Miss Schuyler, on the same subject, he gayly wrote: "He showed that age and the long labors and fatigues of a military life had not in the least impaired his activity, for in three days and a half he reached Hillsborough . . . leaving all his troops to take care of themselves, and get out of the scrape as well as they could."

Hamilton was concerned to have Gates removed and a dependable general named for the command. He wrote to Duane: "But what will be done by Congress? Will he be changed or not? If he is changed, for God's sake overcome prejudice, and send Greene." On December 2, Greene, whose masterly generalship was soon to rescue from the enemy the inland region of the Carolinas, was appointed to lead the forces that Gates in cowardly terror had abandoned.

In his letter to Miss Schuyler concerning the defeat at Camden, Hamilton made a comment which indicated one of his pronounced natural characteristics and also reflected his main political purpose and belief. "This misfortune," he said to her, "affects me less than others, because it is not in my temper to repine at evils that are past, but to endeavor to draw good out of them, and because I think our safety depends on a

total change of system, and this change of system will only be produced by misfortune."

Elizabeth Schuyler, whose years at school were few, was the main assistant in the management of her mother's household, caring more for domestic matters than for books and learning. The cleverest of the General's daughters was Angelica, who had eloped to become the wife of an Englishman, John Barker Church. She had attended the best available school of the time, a seminary at New Rochelle. Hamilton always enjoyed and often complimented her wit. Elizabeth's ambitious lover, praising her "amiable qualities," urged her to cultivate her mind and so acquire "the splendid ones." But Hamilton knew that she, quiet and retiring, was deeply wise; and always he discussed with her weighty matters in which he was interested or with which he had to deal. In some of his letters to her before their marriage,—such as that concerning Gates,—he presented issues or told events of the critical times; although more often he wrote only of love.

Ardently he confessed to her that she, "a little *nut brown maid*," engrossed his life, claiming even his sleep by ruling his dreams. She had changed him from being a hardy soldier into the condition of "a puny lover," he declared. "This may seem," he said, "a very idle disposition in a philosopher and a soldier, but I can plead illustrious examples in my justification. Achilles liked to have sacrificed Greece and his glory to a female captive, and Anthony lost a world for a

have often told you, you wrote prose well but had no genius for poetry. I retract."

#### IV

There was no protracted honeymoon. From Albany, on December 9, 1780, the absent officer sent Washington a letter in which he said: "Mrs. Hamilton presents her respectful compliments to Mrs. Washington and yourself. After the holidays, we shall be at headquarters."

Hamilton had anticipated that he, with his bride, would have had a journey to France; for John Laurens, having been offered a mission as envoy under the minister plenipotentiary at Versailles, had declined the appointment in favor of his friend. He thought Hamilton "equally qualified in point of integrity, and much better in point of ability." But after the news came that Laurens's father, minister to Holland, had been captured by the British and was immured in the Tower, Hamilton relinquished the thought of having a foreign post. He successfully urged his friend to accede to the choice of Congress and go abroad.

It was on February 16, 1781, that Hamilton, having been restive for some time, resigned his position on Washington's staff.

He had not liked being an aide, for he felt that it implied "a kind of personal dependence." Therefore he had been seeking some less subordinate office, one

affording better opportunities for distinguishing himself.

In several instances he had requested of Washington a military command. Concerning one of these instances he wrote: "When I spoke to your Excellency about going to the southward, I explained to you candidly my feelings with respect to military reputation, and how much it was my object to act a conspicuous part in some enterprise that might perhaps raise my character as a soldier above mediocrity."

General Sullivan, after receiving Hamilton's letter proposing a bank, had suggested electing him to the office of Superintendent of Finance, but had found, he said, "the eyes of Congress turned upon Robert Morris as financier." This doubtless was a disappointment to Hamilton, as was his failure to obtain a command, and his loss of the opportunity to go to France.

The discontented aide expressed, just after resigning, very qualified praise of Washington, and confessed a continuous experience of disillusion concerning him. Referring to his past association with the Commander-in-Chief, he declared, writing to Schuyler: "I discovered he was neither remarkable for delicacy nor good temper. . . . The General is a very honest man. His competitors have slender abilities, and less integrity. His popularity has often been necessary to the safety of America. . . . I think it necessary he should still be supported."

The inevitable breach occurred at headquarters, New Windsor. Washington and his secretary passed

each other on the stairs, Hamilton descending with a letter for Tilghman. Washington said that he wished an interview, and Hamilton replied that he would return at once. After a delay occasioned by Lafayette, he found Washington waiting for him at the head of the stairs. "Colonel Hamilton," said the General, "you have kept me waiting . . . these ten minutes. I must tell you, sir, you treat me with disrespect." Hamilton decisively answered: "I am not conscious of it, sir; but since you have thought it necessary to tell me so, we part." In the account of the incident that he wrote to Schuyler, he remarked: "I sincerely believe my absence, which gave so much umbrage, did not last two minutes."

Within an hour after the sharp dialogue, Washington sent, by Tilghman, appreciative assurances to Hamilton, and also a request for a conversation that might heal the difference.

The Commander realized that the loss of his facile, resourceful secretary would be a serious deprivation. This realization had been somewhat determinative in causing Hamilton's failure to obtain a military command. Washington, moreover, had an almost paternal affection for his fiery young aide. Hamilton, not long before resigning, had received a letter from Lafayette, in which the Marquis, ever ardent beyond all the reaches of his speech, declaring to his friend a sentiment for him that had "increased to such a point the world knows nothing about," had said also: "I know the General's friendship and gratitude for you, my dear Hamilton; both are greater than you perhaps im-

agine." At headquarters, Billy Lee, the Commander's popular body-servant, would hear, whenever dispatches arrived or problems arose or decisions were to be executed, the unvarying order: "Call Colonel Hamilton."

Confident that it "could serve no other purpose than to produce explanations mutually disagreeable," Hamilton asked Tilghman to request Washington not to insist on having the proposed conversation, and to say that he, the quondam aide, "did not wish to distress him or the public business, by quitting him before he could derive other assistance by the return of some of the gentlemen who were absent." Hamilton, it seems, did not permanently leave the army camps until after the Yorktown surrender.

General Schuyler, in response to his son-in-law's letter about the breach, wrote deploring the cleavage and urging the consideration: "It falls to the lot of few men to pass through life without one of those unguarded moments which wound the feelings of a friend. Let us then impute them to the frailties of human nature, and with Sterne's recording angel, drop a tear, and blot it out of the page of life. . . . Your services are wanted. They are wanted in that particular station which you have already filled so beneficially to the public, and with such extensive reputation."

But Hamilton would not transgress a certain statement he had formerly made concerning his resignation. "I assure you, my dear sir," he had told Schuyler, "it was not the effect of resentment; it was the deliberate result of maxims I had long formed for the government of my own conduct."

## V

It was on February 20, 1781, that Robert Morris was elected Superintendent of Finance. A member of the Philadelphia firm, Willing, Morris & Company, he was one of the richest men in America.

Though elected in February, Morris did not accept the office until May. The main cause of delay was that Congress at first would not concede his terms. These were that in becoming the Financier of the Government he should not be expected to relinquish the prosecution of his own business enterprises, and that he should have the power of appointing and removing his subordinates. Congress did not strongly object to the first condition, but against the second there was a vigorous protest. What would become of patronage, if Morris were allowed to have his way? Would it not be better to elect a man who would be content in serving as amenable clerk of a committee? The state of finances was so critical, however, and the need of competent fiscal direction so imperative, that Congress, though with reluctance, acceded to Morris's stipulations and thus made it possible for him to assume the responsibilities of the important new position.

While an accommodation between Congress and Morris was being sought, Hamilton, putting aside his own disappointment at not having been elected, wrote the man of commerce and finance a letter which, able and constructive, was destined to fame.

First, the statesmanlike young man expressed the hope that nothing should be permitted to prevent



Morris from serving in the salient position for which he had been chosen. "I know of no other in America," he said, "who unites so many advantages; and of course every impediment to your acceptance is to me a subject of chagrin." Then, starting from the proposition, "'T is by introducing order into our finances . . . that we are finally to gain our object," he magnificently discussed and urged, as a year before he had done in his letter to Sullivan, the establishment of a National Bank.

Hamilton, utterly confident of the soundness of his own ideas on finance, thought that the Bank of Pennsylvania, recently organized, was an inadequate institution. "When I saw the subscriptions," he had declared concerning the venture, "going on to the bank established for supplying the army, I was in hopes it was only the embryo of a more permanent and extensive establishment. But I have reason to believe I shall be disappointed. It does not seem to be at all conducted on the true principles of a bank."

The monetary situation the facts of which gave peculiar relevance to the argument of Hamilton's letter to Morris, was indeed calamitous. Following the failure of an Act of March, 1780, which signified an effort to strengthen the credit of the United States by putting back of it the credit of the several States, Continental notes had sunk to the rating of 175 to 1 in specie. In May, 1781, marchers in a parade through the streets of Philadelphia wore in their hats cockades made of Continental money. The watchers had the queer experience of seeing in the procession a dog plastered

over with paper dollars. Hamilton, critically discussing "the resolution of March, '80," said to Morris: "No paper credit can be substantial, or durable, which has no funds, and which does not unite, immediately, the interest and influence of the moneyed men, in its establishment and preservation."

It was on the 2nd of March, 1781, that Congress held its first meeting under the Confederation. The day before, Maryland, the last of the States to do so, ratified the Articles. The birth of the Confederation was announced with joy and congratulation.

At once, however, the need of constitutional amendments appeared. "We shall not fail of taking advantage of the favorable temper of the states and recommending for ratification such additional articles as will give vigor and authority to government," said Duane. "The fable of the bunch of sticks may well be applied to us," wrote Washington, on March 24, to a friend in Virginia.

After the ratification of the Articles, James Madison submitted, for adoption by Congress, the report: "The United States in congress assembled . . . recommend to the legislature of every state to give authority to employ the force of the United States . . . to compel the states to fulfill their federal engagements." Madison's report was referred to a committee of thirteen, one member from each State. This committee, indefinite and mild in its findings, advised that its place be taken by a smaller group. The members of the new

committee were Edmund Randolph, Oliver Ellsworth, and James M. Varnum.

To Hamilton, who was ahead of all others in the contention for greater federal strength, these congressional proceedings seemed steps determining national destiny. Not unreservedly had he responded to the celebration in March. "The accession of Maryland to the Confederacy," he had written in February, "will be a happy event if it does not make people believe that the Confederacy gives Congress power enough and prevent their acquiring more."

With reference to what was taking place in Congress and to what he thought should be occurring there, he wrote a series of six thoughtful dissertations, the *Continentalist* papers, published by Loudon's of New York. In these papers he dynamically contended that the Confederation, unlike the respective State governments, did not have structure for survival; that the history of the Greek Amphyctions, of the German Diet, of the Helvetic League, illustrated the need of centralized power in federal political organization; that the existing American distress had no commensurate cause in any disaffection of the people, but must be attributed to the failure of the Government; that the Federal Government should have the power of regulating trade and of assuring for itself a sufficient revenue; that resort to a judicious policy of imposts and duties was requisite for a prosperous regulation of trade and for an adequate federal income; that the National Government "should neither be raised above

responsibility or control, nor . . . want the means of maintaining its own weight, authority, dignity, and credit."

## VI

In telling Schuyler about having resigned from Washington's staff, Hamilton had said: "I cannot think of quitting the army during the war." He was debating, however, as to which service he preferred, infantry or artillery. A command in the infantry would, he thought, give him more time "to prosecute studies" relating to his "future career in life."

A resolution in Congress had granted him, as an aide-de-camp, a commission of lieutenant-colonel, dating from March 1, 1777; but he found that to obtain a command he must turn to Washington. This necessity was a harrowing ordeal to Hamilton's pride.

Washington, "not a little embarrassed," answered that it would not be wise, at that time, to give a command to a brevet officer. He cited instances in which officers of the line had resented his having made appointments of the kind asked by Hamilton. "My principal concern," the Commander declared, "arises from an apprehension that you will impute my refusal of your request to other motives than those I have expressed, but I beg you to be assured, I am only influenced by the reasons which I have mentioned." Hamilton, though reiterating his belief that his case was differentiated from "all the former" by his "early entrance into the service" and his subsequent record of constancy, answered: "I assure your Excellency that

I am too well persuaded of your candor to attribute your refusal to any other cause than an apprehension of inconveniences that may attend the appointment."

Concerning his impetuous friend's resignation from Washington's staff, Lafayette soon afterwards observed: "It did not, however, go farther than leaving the family; the advice of Hamilton has since, in several circumstances, been friendly asked by the Commander-in-Chief." When, in the spring of 1781, Washington went to Newport for conference with the French officers, he invited his former aide to accompany him. While there, on a certain morning he wrote to Hamilton: "If we do not ride to the Point to see the fleet pass out, I am to have a conference with Count de Rochambeau, and the engineer, directly after breakfast, at which I wish you to be present." Above his name was the assurance: "I am, sincerely and affectionately, yours."

After returning from Newport, Hamilton hastened to Albany. He and Betsey, who was glad that he had been prevented from obtaining a command, had memorable weeks together in the manorial comfort of her father's home. Their talk was of the child they were expecting, and of getting established in a profession, and of plans for a place of their own.

Hamilton found "that nothing was said on the subject of a command," when he returned from Albany to the camp at Dobbs Ferry. "I wrote the General a letter," he informed Betsey, "and inclosed him my commission. This morning Tilghman came to me in his name, pressed me to retain my commission, with an

assurance that he would endeavor, by all means, to give me a command. . . . Though I know you would be happy to hear had I rejected this proposal, it is a pleasure my reputation would not permit me to afford you. I consented to retain my commission, and accept the command."

When the French squadron under De Grasse was approaching the coast of Virginia, and the question with Washington was whether to relinquish the possibility of an attack on New York and make a forced march against Cornwallis at Yorktown, the Commander invited Hamilton to a Council of War that was to make the decision.

A determination having been reached that the movement should be southward, Hamilton, in telling Betsey of the intended campaign, wrote: "I begged your father . . . to intimate to you, by degrees, the probability of its taking place." Hamilton's letter was full of distress and affection. "A part of the army, my dear girl," he said, "is going to Virginia, and I must, of necessity, be separated at a much greater distance from my beloved wife. . . . I am unhappy; I am unhappy beyond expression. . . . I am miserable, because I know you will be so; I am wretched at the idea of flying so far from you, without a single hour's interview, to tell you all my pains and all my love."

From the Head of Elk, where the army embarked on September 7, Hamilton again wrote to his wife. "What a world will soon be between us!" he exclaimed. "To support the idea, all my fortitude is insufficient. What

must be the case with you, who have the most female of female hearts? I sink at the perspective of your distress, and I look to heaven to be your guardian and supporter."

Writing from Annapolis, disclosing to Betsey his conflicting emotions, he said: "How checquered is human life! How precarious is happiness! How easily do we often part with it for a shadow! These are the reflections that frequently intrude themselves upon me with a painful application. I am going to do my duty. Our operations will be so conducted as to economize the lives of men. Exert your fortitude and rely upon Heaven."

On October 12, the besiegers were within 300 yards of the British lines before Yorktown.

Two redoubts held them back. It was decided that these must be taken, the French attacking one and the Americans the other. The objective assigned to the Americans was to be assailed at the orders of Lafayette, who commanded an army of State and Continental troops. Lafayette gave the leadership of the besieging van to his aide, Lieutenant-Colonel Gimat.

Hamilton protested against this choice, saying that the leadership of the van belonged to him, since the hour for the assault fell within his tour of duty. In a note to Washington he stated his reasons for claiming the command; and Washington, overruling the Marquis, put Gimat aside, declaring that his former aide was entitled to the honor and should lead the van.

The night of October 14, the battalions of which Hamilton had been given command made their daring advance. Among the officers were Gimat, Fish, and Laurens. The redoubt was manned by British and German troops under Major Campbell. In two columns, with unloaded guns, Hamilton's force went forward. Scaling the palisades and the abatis, the besiegers approached the enemy's stronghold. When they reached it, Hamilton sprang from the stooping back of one of his soldiers to the parapet above, and valiantly led all others in entering the redoubt.

"The rapidity and immediate success of the assault are the best comment on the behavior of the troops," Hamilton, the next day, reported to Lafayette. "The enemy," said the victorious Colonel in making an official return of the prisoners, "are entitled to the acknowledgment of an honorable defense."

Washington was proud of the young soldier for whom his feelings, in being affectionate, were also proprietary. "Few cases," he observed, "have exhibited greater proofs of intrepidity, coolness, and firmness, than were shown on this occasion."

By the first post Hamilton sent a letter from Yorktown to Albany. "Two nights ago, my Eliza," he wrote, "my duty and my honor obliged me to take a step in which your happiness was too much risked. I commanded an attack upon one of the enemy's redoubts; we carried it in an instant, and with little loss. You will see the particulars in the Philadelphia papers."



## VII

After the victory at Yorktown, Washington, gloriously triumphant, visited Mount Vernon; and Hamilton, proud of the distinction he had lately won, went to Albany. There, for three or four months, he took one of the infrequent vacations of his career. Mingling with the Schuylers' interesting coterie of friends, and in tender companionship with Betsey, he rested from the stretch of labors that had engaged him during the nine years since his arrival from St. Croix.

It was at this time that he announced his purpose of becoming a lawyer. This intention on his part did not receive the approval of those who, interested in his future, thought that he should devote himself to public service. Many held the opinion that he would be appointed one of the commissioners for arranging a treaty in conclusion of the war. Schuyler, proud of Hamilton's abilities, offered to make every financial provision for an entirely official career on the part of his son-in-law.

But the son-in-law was then and throughout his life sensitive and determined about being economically independent. Moreover, he had come upon a period of aversion to the appeals of essaying a conspicuous part in the determination of general affairs. He had recently declared to Betsey: "Let others waste their time and their tranquillity in a vain pursuit of power and glory; be it my object to be happy in a quiet retreat with my better angel." Referring to a son, born in January, he

wrote to Meade: "I lose all taste for the pursuits of ambition. I sigh for nothing but the company of my wife and my baby. The ties of duty alone, or imagined duty, keep me from renouncing public life altogether."

The letter to Meade was written from Philadelphia, where Hamilton had gone, about the 1st of March, to obtain an agreement concerning his status with reference to the army. It was generally thought that the surrender at Yorktown would prove to be the virtual end of the war. The intelligence Hamilton had received from Lafayette, De Noailles, and others, tended to confirm for him this hopeful opinion. Two of his closest army friends, Harrison and Meade, had already withdrawn from the service.

Hamilton, though desiring better opportunity for study, and though refusing, because of previous experience, to apply for a command in a possible new campaign, did not wish to resign from the army before the actual termination of hostilities. He proposed, therefore, to retain his commission, without pay, and have recognition as an inactive officer. This proposal he brought to the attention of Congress through Washington as intermediary. "The bare possibility," said Hamilton, "of rendering an equivalent will not justify to my scruples the receiving any future emoluments from my commission." Moved by his inherent contempt for lucre he went on record: "I therefore renounce, from this time, all claim to the compensations attached to my military station during the war or afterwards."

There being no hindrance to his desire concerning

his army status, Hamilton returned to Albany with the idea of immediately studying law. He rented a house and invited his college friend Troup, by then a lawyer, to live with him as his tutor.

The closing of King's College, six years before, had not put an end to Hamilton's scholarly application. On pages of pay-rolls that he kept when a captain, in 1776-77, he wrote reflections on philosophy, politics and finance, and also thus catalogued the following books and subjects in which he was then interested: Rousseau's *Emilius*, Smith's *History of New York*, Leonidas, *View of the Universe*, *Lex Mercatoria*, Millot's *History of France*, *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg*, *Review of the characters of the principal Nations of Europe*, *Review of Europe*, *History of Prussia*, *History of France*, *Lassel's Voyage through Italy*, *Robinson's Charles V*, *Present State of Europe*, *Grecian History*, *Baretti's Travels*, *Bacon's Essays*, *Philosophical Transactions*, *Hobbes' Dialogues*, *Plutarch's Morals*, *Cicero's Morals*, *Orations—Demosthenes*, *Cudworth's Intellectual System*, *Entick's History of the late War*, *European Settlements in America*, *Ralt's Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, *Winn's History of America*, *Montaigne's Essays*.<sup>1</sup>—"The present plan is the product of some reading on the subjects of commerce and finance," remarked Hamilton in his letter to Sullivan concerning a national bank.

Troup, though remembering how Hamilton had worked while in college, was amazed anew at the intensity of his friend's further concentration, in studying law. He was sure that Hamilton, who was given to

walking back and forth when he was deep in reading or in cogitation, took steps enough, with a law book before his eyes, to have traversed the entire confederacy. Could the student, the intervening time being only four months, be ready in July for examination by the Supreme Court? Troup directed the preparation, indicating the works that must be mastered, and Hamilton acquired the prescribed knowledge with the quickness of accomplishment which characterized his genius. '

The work of learning did not, however, proceed without interruptions. First, the case of Captain Asgill moved Hamilton to turn attention to public affairs, and then, after that distraction, came his appointment as Receiver of Continental Taxes for the State of New York.

Hamilton thought that Asgill's life should be spared. He realized that the recent hanging of Captain Huddy by a party of loyalists was a brutal act, and he had been informed that Sir Guy Carleton had refused to surrender Lippincott, the captain of the men who had murdered Huddy; but he strongly objected to the military decision according to which there had been, by lot, a selection of one of Cornwallis's officers to be killed in retaliation. It was upon Sir Charles Asgill's son, also Charles, a mere lad, that the cruel selection had fallen. Washington, indignant over Huddy's death, had ordered the stern lottery. Hamilton decided to make an appeal to Washington through Henry Knox. "I address myself to you upon this occasion," he wrote, "because I know your liberality and your influence with the General." In the course of his letter to Knox



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GENERAL PHILIP SCHUYLER'S HOMESTEAD AT ALBANY



he declared: "A sacrifice of this sort is entirely repugnant to the genius of the age we live in. . . . The time for it, if ever there was one, is past. But it is said that the Commander-in-Chief has pledged himself for it and cannot recede. Inconsistency in this case would be better than consistency."

Washington, soon beginning to realize the validity of such considerations as Hamilton was urging, laid the Asgill case before Congress. But Congress withheld decision. Lady Asgill, the condemned boy's mother, then succeeded, through the sympathy of Marie Antoinette, in getting the Throne of France to send to Washington a recommendation which, when he presented it to Congress, resulted in the vote: "That, considering the letter of the 29th of July last, from the Count de Vergennes to General Washington, interceding for Captain Asgill, the commander-in-chief be directed to set him at liberty."

On May 2, 1782, Robert Morris, Superintendent of Finance, invited Hamilton to be New York Receiver of Continental Taxes. The remuneration would be a percentage of the money paid into the general treasury. Hamilton at first declined the office, saying that, because his time was then "so precious," the proposed compensation would be too small. Morris then officially suggested that the compensation be on the basis, not of the State's payments, but of its quota.

That offer appealed to Hamilton, but in his acceptance of it he expressed the stipulation that he be authorized by Morris to attend meetings of the Legislature as official adviser on Continental affairs. "There is only

one way," he wrote the Financier, "in which I can imagine a prospect of being materially useful,—that is, in seconding your application to the State. In popular assemblies much may sometimes be brought about by personal discussions, by entering into details, and combating objections as they rise. If it should at any time be thought advisable by you to empower me to act in this capacity, I shall be happy to do every thing that depends upon me to effectuate your views." Replying to Hamilton's proposal, Morris wrote: "It gives me singular pleasure, to find that you have yourself pointed out one of the principal objects of your appointment. . . . Your former situation in the army, the present situation of that very army, your connexions in the state, your perfect knowledge of men and measures, and the abilities with which heaven has blessed you, will give you a fine opportunity to forward the public service, by convincing the legislature of the necessity of copious supplies."

Thus, in his twenty-sixth year, having often rendered civic and military service of more than ordinary importance, Alexander Hamilton was taking the first post in his stupendous career of official statesmanship.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THWARTED LEADERSHIP

“At the period of the peace with Great Britain I found myself a member of Congress, by appointment of the legislature of this State.”



## I

“**I** AM pressing to qualify myself for admission the next term, which will be the latter end of July,” wrote Hamilton to Morris, in June. “After this, if you think an interview with me necessary, I will wait upon you in Philadelphia.”

But the new Receiver of Continental Taxes did not defer the business that devolved on him, June 17, 1782, with his acceptance of office. On July 22, from Poughkeepsie, where he had gone to have an interview on the subject of taxes with a committee of the Legislature, he sent Morris a letter in which he deprecatingly said: “As it is of indispensable importance to me to leave this place immediately to prepare for my examination . . . which is at hand, it is possible, after I have left it, contrary ideas will prevail.”

In consequence of the examination Hamilton was admitted as an attorney; and at the ensuing term of court, in October, he obtained, after a further test, the station of counsellor-at-law.

In his first political office, which, by his own ambitious stipulation, gave him the special right of conferring with the Legislature, Hamilton constructively worked toward three associated ends: reorganization of the National Government, improvement of the system of taxation in New York, and fulfillment of the measures and policies of Robert Morris.

To inquiries from the Superintendent of Finance, many of which were sent as circulars to collectors in all the States, Hamilton was earnestly responsive. The Financier wanted complete information concerning supplies, taxes, fiscal conditions; and Hamilton, by persuasively and repeatedly writing to county treasurers and others, had remarkable success in procuring the desired knowledge. Morris received from his indefatigable appointee, besides many financial reports, "a full view of the situation and temper" of the State of New York. This interpretation was a jeremiad, and Hamilton marked it *private*. "Here we find," he lamented, "the general disease which infects all our constitutions—an excess of popularity. There is no *order* that has a will of its own. The inquiry constantly is what will *please*, not what will *benefit* the people. In such a government there can be nothing but temporary expenditure, fickleness, and folly."

Though Hamilton succeeded in getting a resolution passed that there should be a committee on revision of the revenue system of New York, he failed in his further efforts for the fiscal changes he desired to see adopted by that State. "The Legislature have also appointed," he wrote Morris, "at my instance, a committee to devise, in its recess, a more effectual system of taxation, and to communicate with me on this subject." Instructed by the information he had gathered for the Financier, he ingeniously conceived a new mode of taxation for New York and submitted it, with earnest argument, to the committee. Shortly afterwards, in disappointment, he sent Morris this report: "In my last

I informed you that the committee appointed by the Legislature on the subject of taxation were together. In spite of my efforts, they have parted without doing any thing decisive."

In working toward the supreme end of reorganizing the Confederation, the young Receiver of Continental Taxes furthered a meeting at Albany for considering the condition of the public credit, and also took a leading part in the adoption by the New York Legislature of resolutions for a constitutional convention of the States.

The meeting at Albany followed a similar one at Philadelphia; both had the object of protesting against the suspension of interest on Continental certificates issued at the beginning of the war. The Albany convention, through a committee, sent to the New York holders of Continental securities a ringing address which was manifestly of Hamilton's authorship. This address, describing the lack and the need of concerted, national measures in support of the public credit, prophetically affirmed: "These states might, with ease to themselves, provide the means requisite to fund the debts already incurred, and to procure farther loans."

The reverberating action that gave New York the glory of having been the first State to propose a convention for amending the Confederation, was the passage by the Legislature of resolutions that were written by Alexander Hamilton, aged twenty-five. They were unanimously adopted, on Sunday, July 21, 1782, after two days of discussion. It was voted that the Governor of New York transmit them to the Executive of every

State. They sounded an appeal "to Congress to recommend, and to each State to adopt, the measure of assembling a GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE STATES, especially authorized to revise and amend the CONFEDERATION, reserving a right to the respective LEGISLATURES to ratify their determinations."

## II

So earnest was his desire to have his son-in-law continue in public office that Schuyler, in July, 1782, withdrew from the Congress of the Confederation with the purpose of transferring his place in that body to Hamilton. The Legislature accordingly elected the younger man.

Though Hamilton always refused to accept financial assistance from him, Schuyler could and did give the furthering aid of his social and political influence. Friends from the beginning of their acquaintance, the two men were constantly devoted to each other throughout succeeding years.

As Hamilton contemplated serving as a delegate to Congress, a thrilling enthusiasm intermittently possessed him. Thus stirred, he wrote to Laurens: "This State has pretty unanimously elected me to Congress. My time of service commences in November. . . . Peace made, my dear friend, a new scene opens. The object then will be to make our independence a blessing. To do this we must secure our Union on solid foundations—a Herculean task,—and to effect which, mountains of prejudice must be levelled! . . . Quit

your sword, my friend; put on the toga. Come to Congress. . . . We have fought side by side to make America free; let us hand in hand struggle to make her happy."

Not yet, however, did Hamilton have any settled willingness to accept a prospect of lengthy public service. In a different mood from that in which he had written Laurens, with reference to his election he remarked to another friend: "I do not hope to reform the State, although I shall endeavor to do all the good I can." Though New York had issued a call for a constitutional convention, Hamilton felt only a wavering confidence in the likelihood of improvement in the general political situation. "I think this a very eligible step," he said concerning the action of New York, "though I doubt of the concurrence of the other States." His sense of estrangement from Washington, a disquieting result of the breach at New Windsor, probably apprehended difficulties in any path toward political preferment. That may have been the cause of his feeling, more than once expressed, that he should not be chosen as one of the peace commissioners.

The disdain that abundantly belonged to his temper was quite pronounced at this time. In giving Meade friendly assurances, he confessed: "Experience is a continual comment on the worthlessness of the human race; and the few exceptions we find have the greater right to be valued in proportion as they are rare. I know few men estimable, fewer amiable; and when I meet with one of the last description, it is not in my power to withhold my affection."

Though uncertain about seeking a career, Hamilton was absorbed in domestic interests and concerns. Their plans dependent only on the expected British withdrawal from New York, he and Betsey were anticipating a removal to that city, where there would be a law office and a home. "I am going to throw away a few more months in public life," to Lafayette he wrote in still another mood concerning his election, "and then retire a simple citizen and good *pater familias*. . . . You see the disposition I am in. You are condemned to run the race of ambition all your life. I am already tired of the career, and dare to leave it." Meade, who had asked Hamilton about Philip, the small son, received in reply this description: "It is agreed on all hands that he is handsome; his features are good, his eye is not only sprightly and expressive, but full of benignity. His attitude in sitting, is, by connoisseurs, esteemed graceful, and he has a method of waving his hand that announces the future orator. He stands, however, rather awkwardly, and as his legs have not all the delicate slimness of his father's, it is feared he may never excel as much in dancing, which is probably the only accomplishment in which he will not be a model."

Hamilton's father, still living in St. Vincent, had received an affectionate invitation to come to New York and make his home with his son's family. Hamilton, in planning the invitation with Betsey's concurrence, had told her that he should describe her to their father in the distant scene as "his black-eyed daughter" whose tender care would "make the blessing of his gray hairs."



That year, 1782, Hamilton learned of the death of Peter Lavine in South Carolina, who, dying rich, had left him a small legacy, he was informed, but had "disposed of the bulk of his fortune to strangers." The death of this half-brother of his touched the chords of family sentiment in Hamilton's nature to a diverse response, perhaps causing memories of his homeless boyhood to accentuate his appreciation of domestic contentment. "You know the circumstances that abate my distress," he told Betsey, "yet my heart acknowledges the rights of a brother."

Before Hamilton's letter urging him to "put on the toga" reached South Carolina, Laurens was killed. When he met his death, in a skirmish on the banks of the Combahee, many people of all the country mourned the passing of their favorite soldier, the "Bayard of the Revolution." A winsome man, who, said Hamilton, "refined on the refinements of generosity," Laurens was everywhere liked for his charm and modest gallantry. His father, freed in exchange for Cornwallis, was still abroad, a peace commissioner, when he learned that his heroic son had been killed. The preliminary treaty signed, Henry Laurens returned to his plantation on the Cooper River. He lived ten years longer, but they were years of virtual retirement and inconsolable grief. Hamilton understood and shared this sorrow, for he never loved a friend more than he did John Laurens. "I feel the deepest affliction," he wrote General Greene, "at the news we have just received of the loss of our dear and estimable friend Laurens. His career of virtue is at an end. . . .

The world will feel the loss of a man who has left few like him behind, and America of a citizen whose heart realized that patriotism of which others only talk. I shall feel the loss of a friend I truly and most tenderly loved, and one of a very small number."

### III

The Articles of Confederation made but one provision for obtaining federal revenue. This plan was that Congress should estimate the value of granted or surveyed lands in the several States and accordingly make requisitions upon the Legislatures, and that the States should levy the taxes for their respective quotas.

The arrangement failed from the beginning. The States were prevailingly indifferent about complying with the plan; and Congress was baffled by the difficulty of finding an acceptable standard of apportionment and evaluation. In its first requisition Congress called upon the States for eight million dollars, but at the beginning of 1783, a year and three months after the requisition, less than half a million of the needed sum had been received.

Anticipating this failure, Congress had passed a resolution on the 3rd of February, 1781, asking the States for power to levy a five-per-cent duty on imports. The money to be thus obtained should be used only for the expenses and debts of the war. The proposal, tantamount to an amendment of the Articles, required for its adoption the unanimous consent of the States.

By the 25th of November, 1782, the day Hamilton

reached Philadelphia and entered Congress, all the States except Rhode Island and Georgia had acceded to the pending impost measure. The situation seemed, therefore, to justify hope. But its good prospect did not last. Soon began a series of very disquieting events.

Pennsylvania had sent Congress two memorials announcing that unless holders of federal certificates within that State were paid at once, the liquidation should be made from the revenue collected by the Legislature for the general Government. Congress could not meet the requirement the State was pressing, and the threatened reduction of income from Pennsylvania would have had the disastrous effect of impoverishing further the national treasury. Daniel Carroll, Thomas McKean, and David Howell had been appointed a committee to consider this critical problem. Their report was heard by Congress on November 20, but by a strange oversight it was not transmitted to the Pennsylvania Legislature. That body, not having heard from Congress, deemed itself disrespectfully treated and, therefore, gave notice of its intention to proceed at once toward making the deduction in its federal revenue.

Congress, much alarmed, then appointed, to solve if possible the disturbing issue, Rutledge, Madison, and Hamilton. These three members of Congress, in conferring with a committee from the Legislature, made such an appealing presentation of federal needs, that, according to official records, in consequence of the meeting "the legislature suspended their plan."

Before this pacification with Pennsylvania was ef-

fectcd, however, Rhode Island had taken a recalcitrant stand, the Legislature unanimously rejecting the federal recommendation of a five-per-cent impost.

A few days previous to the arrival in Philadelphia of the adverse news from Rhode Island, Hamilton moved "that a deputation be sent to the State of Rhode Island, for the purpose . . . of urging the absolute necessity of a compliance with the resolution of Congress of the 3d day of February, 1781, . . . as a measure essential to the safety and reputation of these states." In accordance with his motion, the deputation was immediately elected—those chosen being Samuel Osgood, Abner Nash, and Thomas Mifflin. When the report of Rhode Island's disappointing procedure reached Philadelphia, Hamilton wrote the Governor, William Greene, a letter of persuasive but emphatic remonstrance, in which, describing the anxiety of Congress concerning the impost measure, he said: "And if this is refused, they anticipate calamities of the most menacing nature—with this consolation, however, that they have faithfully discharged their trust, and that the mischiefs which follow cannot be attributed to them."

The Legislature of Rhode Island sent Congress a statement of reasons for having refused compliance. These considerations were that the proposed duty would be heaviest for the most commercial States; that the impost measure would place in the different States officers unaccountable to them; that the contemplated plan would render Congress independent of the States. Hamilton, Madison, and Fitzsimons composed the committee appointed to answer these objections.

The answer—a devastating refutation—was written by Hamilton. In it he contended for the principle “that every duty on imports is incorporated with the price of the commodity, and ultimately paid by the consumer”; then argued against the stand taken by Rhode Island, as implying that even “the power given by the Confederation to Congress, to appoint all officers in the post-office, was illegal and unconstitutional”; and, answering the third objection, declared that frequency and rotation in election of the members of Congress were “the true source of security in a representative republic.”

While the issue with Rhode Island was pending, Virginia, at the instance of Richard Henry Lee, dashed all hopes of the impost measure by suddenly withdrawing the assent given two years before. The stated reason for the rescinding act was: “The permitting any power other than the general assembly of this commonwealth to levy duties or taxes upon citizens of this state within the same is injurious to its sovereignty . . . contravening the spirit of the confederation.”

At the next session of the Virginia Legislature, the nationalistic doctrines of Hamilton, as enunciated in his answer to Rhode Island, were “reprobated as alarming and of dangerous tendency.”

#### IV

During the winter of 1782-83, Washington's army rested on the hills near Newburgh; and Hamilton, a member of Congress, was accused of instigating among

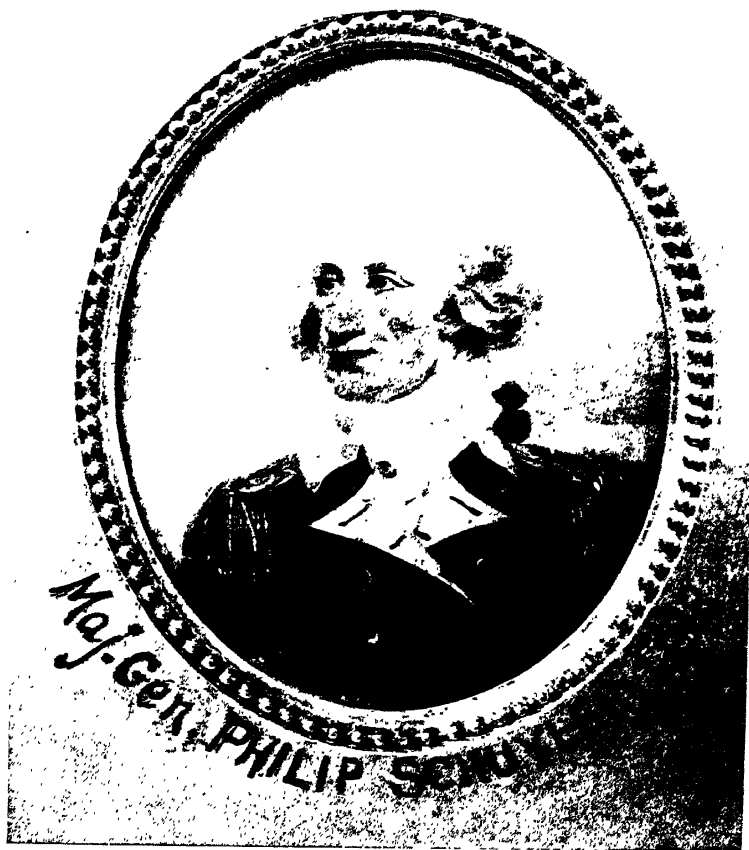
the soldiers a gory plot. This charge arose in connection with a very hazardous sequence of events.

Because of inability to obtain their pay, there was that winter acute dissatisfaction among the officers and their men. To express this grievance and entreat consideration the officers sent a committee—Major-General Macdougall and Colonels Ogden and Brooks—with an address to Congress.

The address was a desperate plea. "We have borne all," its authors declared, "that men can bear. Our property is expended; our private resources are at an end. We therefore beg that a supply of money may be forwarded to the army as soon as possible. . . . General dissatisfaction . . . is gaining ground in the army, from the pressure of evils and injuries, which, in the course of seven long years, have made their condition, in many instances, wretched."

Hamilton was made chairman of a committee in Congress to devise, in collaboration with the Financier, recommendations concerning the memorial from the army. The report he wrote and advocated was, in essence, that the soldiers be paid as soon and as much as possible; but that after such provision they should have no priority over other creditors of the United States, except that, regarding the officers' half-pay for life, there should be offered an optional commutation, which might perhaps be liquidated in money instead of certificates.

No one was more sympathetic with the distress of the army than Hamilton. "I write," he averred in a letter, "as a soldier who feels what is due to an army



*Photograph by Brown Bros.*

MAJOR GENERAL PHILIP SCHUYLER





which has suffered every thing and done much for the safety of America." But in lamenting the unfortunate plight of the soldiery, he hoped that their troubles might be made to further the purpose of strengthening the Continental Government. It seemed to him and to other leaders in Congress that "the necessities and discontents of the army presented themselves as a powerful engine." The thought was that of uniting the importunity of the soldiers and the urgency of the civilian creditors in order to force the States into a compliance with federal measures and plans.

This daring idea having captured his imagination, Hamilton felt the need of turning to Washington. "Flattering myself," he wrote, "that your knowledge of me will induce you to receive the observations I make, as dictated by a regard to the public good, I take the liberty to suggest to you my ideas on some matters of delicacy and importance." After describing the desperation of the soldiers, he said: "The claims of the army, urged with moderation, but with firmness, may operate on those weak minds which are influenced by their apprehensions more than by their judgments, so as to produce a concurrence in the measures which the exigencies of affairs demand."

He then expressed a sense of danger and made an appeal to Washington: "But the difficulty will be to keep a *complaining and suffering army* within the bounds of moderation. This your Excellency's influence must effect. In order to do it, it will be advisable not to discountenance their endeavors to procure redress, but rather, by the intervention of confidential

and prudent persons, *to take the direction of them.*"

In replying to this letter Washington, admitting that in his judgment the posture of affairs held threatening aspects, said: "I shall pursue the same steady line of conduct which has governed me hitherto, fully convinced that the sensible and discerning part of the army cannot be unacquainted (although I never took pains to inform them) with the services I have rendered it on more occasions than one. This, and pursuing the suggestions in your letter, which I am happy to find coincide with my practice for several months past . . . leave me under no great apprehension of its exceeding the bounds of reason and moderation." Hamilton answered: "I am happy to find you coincident in opinion with me on the conduct proper to be observed by yourself. I am persuaded more and more it is that which is most consistent with your own reputation and the public safety."

Gouverneur Morris, at this time assistant to the Superintendent of Finance, entertained, concerning the weakness of the Confederacy, adverse sentiments devoid of restraint. Within a year after the adoption of the Articles he had written to Greene: "I have no hope, no expectation that the government will acquire force; and I will go further, I have no hope that our union can subsist, except in the form of an absolute monarchy, and this does not seem to consist with the taste and temper of the people." In January, 1783, the month the deputation of complaining soldiers went from Newburgh to Philadelphia, he wrote to Jay: "The army have swords in their hands. . . . Depend

on it, good will arise from the situation to which we are hastening . . . I think it probable that much of convulsion will ensue, yet it must terminate in giving to government that power without which government is but a name."

About two months after this letter from Morris to Jay was written, Walter Stewart, an inspector of troops, returned from Philadelphia—where Morris was—to Newburgh, and went directly to the quarters of Gates, the Commander's insidious enemy. Immediately from Gates's quarters rumors were circulated through the camp that no one expected the army to disband until they had received justice; that the civilian creditors looked to them for aid and would, if necessary, join them in the field; that some members of Congress wished that an insurrection might take place, to compel the public to support an adequate government.

Stewart, ostensible agent of insurrection, was announced as "a kind of agent from the friends of the army in Congress." He could not have been Hamilton's agent; for Hamilton despised Gates and abjured all who were in association with him. Moreover, he was loyal to Washington. On the evening of a congressional conference at the house of Thomas Fitzsimons in Philadelphia—not long before Stewart's arrival at Newburgh—Hamilton, according to Madison, had said, "that he knew General Washington intimately and perfectly; that his extreme reserve, mixed sometimes with a degree of asperity of temper, (both of which were said to have increased of late,) had contributed to the decline of his popularity; but that his virtue, his patriot-

ism and firmness, would, it might be depended upon, never yield to any dishonorable or disloyal plans into which he might be called; that he would sooner suffer himself to be cut to pieces; that he, (Mr. Hamilton,) knowing this to be his true character, wished him to be the conductor of the army in their plan for redress, in order that they might be moderated and directed to proper objects, and exclude some other leader who might foment and guide their councils; that with this view he had taken the liberty to write to the general on this subject, and to recommend such a policy to him."

A few days after Stewart came to Newburgh, Major John Armstrong, aide to Gates, wrote to the discontented soldiery an anonymous address which was given surreptitious but general circulation among them. With the address went a call for a meeting of all officers on the next day. In the document of which he was the concealed writer, Armstrong expressed, using fiery words, the spirit of mutiny. "If you have sense enough to discover, and spirit enough to oppose tyranny under whatever garb it may assume," the soldiers were advised, "awake; attend to your situation, and redress yourselves. If the present moment be lost, every future effort is in vain; and your threats then will be as empty as your entreaties now." With evident reference to Washington, the address contained this counsel: "Appeal from the justice to the fears of government . . . and suspect the man who would advise to more moderation and longer forbearance."

The irregular meeting was to have taken place on

the evening of March 11, and Washington did not see the incendiary address until the morning of that day. He promptly issued general orders, disapproving the anonymous call for a meeting and requiring all the highest officers and a representation of the lower ranks to assemble on the 15th at noon. After the Commander's orders appeared, the plans for the meeting on the 11th were revoked, and Armstrong sent out another, somewhat less rebellious, address.

When the officers convened on the 15th, Washington read to them his analysis and condemnation of the inciting, anonymous document that had been passed around in the camp. "Let me," he urged, "conjure you in the name of our common country, as you value your own sacred honor, as you respect the rights of humanity, and as you regard the military and national character of America, to express your utmost horror and detestation of the man who . . . wickedly attempts to open the floodgates of civil discord and deluge our rising empire in blood."

Near the conclusion of his reading Washington paused to put on his spectacles, which he had not before worn in public. In doing this, he unaffectedly remarked: "I have grown gray in your service, and now find myself growing blind." When, shortly after making that statement, he left the meeting, it was evident that the officers' affectionate loyalty to their chief had been intensely revived.

Gates, who by Washington's appointment was presiding, saw that all sympathy with the sentiments of the threatening communications had vanished. It was with

unwonted meekness, therefore, that he put the resolution, which was unanimously carried, "that the officers of the American army view with abhorrence and reject with disdain the infamous propositions contained in a late anonymous address to them."

Washington, in a letter to Hamilton on March 4, had referred to Gates's influence as the "old leaven" which was "again beginning to work, under a mask of the most perfect dissimulation and apparent cordiality."

Just after the Newburgh crisis, in referring to the Morrisses, Robert and Gouverneur, the Commander, explaining a previous letter, told his former aide: "I meant to apply my observation to Mr. Morris, to whom, or rather to Mr. Gouverneur Morris is ascribed in a great degree the groundwork of the superstructure which was intended to be raised in the army by the anonymous addresser."

Concerning his own conduct with regard to the Newburgh threat, Hamilton received from Washington this assurance: "I should do injustice to report what I believe to be the opinion of the army, were I not to inform you that they consider you as a friend, zealous to serve them, and one who has espoused their interests in Congress upon every proper occasion."

Hamilton's own comment regarding imputations of responsibility for the dangerous happenings in the army was: "I do not wonder at the suspicions . . . nor should I be surprised to hear that I have been

pointed out as one of the persons concerned in playing the game. . . . But facts must speak for themselves."

## V

Rhode Island and Virginia having defeated the fiscal measure of 1781, the efforts of Congress were turned to the task of devising a substitute plan. After several months of consideration and debate, Congress passed, on April 18, 1783, a new financial recommendation to the States.

"This plan," reasoned Hamilton, "was framed to accommodate it to the objections of some of the States, but this spirit of accommodation will only serve to render it less efficient without making it more palatable." When the vote on the measure was taken, he and the two delegates from Rhode Island composed, in uncongenial alliance, the dissenting minority.

The new fiscal recommendation contained four main provisions: that the States invest Congress with the power of levying certain specified imposts and also a five-per-cent *ad valorem* duty on all other imported goods, the revenue collectors to be appointed by the States and made responsible to Congress; that aside from imposts, and with the same arrangement regarding collectors, each of the States establish effectual internal taxation for obtaining its quota of federal revenue; that the eighth of the Articles be so amended as to make population, not lands, the standard of assessment in the requisitions upon the various States; that

both the right of Congress to lay duties on imported goods and the State agencies of federal taxation continue for only twenty-five years, the revenue from these two sources to be applied exclusively in paying the expenses and debts of the war.

Hamilton voted against this historic proposal because of these three nationalistic reasons: it did not provide that Congress should designate the articles to be taxed by the States; its definite arrangement for revenue included a period of only twenty-five years; it gave to each State the appointment of its federal collectors, not reserving even the nomination of them to the United States. "A leading rule," the young New York delegate had written Clinton, "which I have laid down for the direction of my conduct is this, that, while I would have a just deference for the expectations of the States, I would never consent to amuse them by attempts which must either fail in the execution or be productive of evil. I would rather incur the negative inconvenience of delay than the positive mischiefs of injudicious expedients."

During the debate on the financial plan Hamilton, objecting, from a sense of public crisis, to the rule by which all sessions of Congress were secret, moved that, when the subject of fiscal measures was under discussion, the doors should be opened to interested citizens. Concerning this unprecedented motion Madison reported: "Congress adjourned, it being the usual hour, and the motion being generally disrelished."

At another point in the prolonged debate on the



fiscal measure Hamilton said, referring to the States: "It is expedient to introduce the influence of officers deriving their emoluments from, and consequently interested in supporting the power of, Congress." Madison noted: "This remark was imprudent, and injurious to the cause which it was meant to serve. This influence was the very source of jealousy which rendered the States adverse to a revenue. . . . All the members of Congress who concurred in any degree with the States in this jealousy smiled at the disclosure. Mr. Bland, and still more Mr. Lee, who were of this number, took notice, in private conversation, that Mr. Hamilton had let out the secret."

Early in April, Hamilton had announced on the floor that he would soon present a resolution proposing a general convention that should have the object of strengthening the Federal Government. Though, in a letter to Washington, he ingenuously said, "I cannot myself enter into the views of coercion which some gentlemen entertain," yet, exasperated at the weakness of the existing, particularistic system, he was constantly desiring fundamental changes in the Confederation.

But there was much to make his desire seem fatuous. The call for a general convention, that he had written for the New York Legislature the previous summer, had been duly transmitted to Congress; but at the beginning of April, 1783, almost a month was yet to pass before that body would appoint a committee to consider the important memorial.

For some time after Hamilton entered Congress he

had thought that "the insufficiency of the Confederation" might precipitate a constitutional reconstruction, and he had found the same hopeful expectation in other minds. "The proselytes to this opinion," he then wrote Clinton, "are increasing fast, and many of the most sensible men acknowledge the wisdom of the measure recommended by your Legislature at their last sitting." Subsequent experience and events were such, however, that in discouragement he wrote to Washington: "There are good intentions in the majority of Congress, but there is not sufficient wisdom or decision. . . . There is a fatal opposition to Continental views. . . . I fear we have been contending for a shadow."

Hamilton's announcement that he would present a resolution proposing a convention was not fulfilled. Down through "Twelfthly" he wrote the resolution, but, as he later recorded on the manuscript, it was "abandoned for want of support."

He lacked support for his intended proposal, and it seems that also he considered, as a substitute for it, another plan. The other plan, drastic and impatient, was that of inducing Congress "to inform their constituents of . . . the impossibility of conducting the public affairs . . . with powers so disproportioned to their responsibility; and, having done this, in a full and forcible manner, to adjourn the moment the definitive treaty was ratified."

The new financial measure, depending for adoption on the unanimous concurrence of the States, was

promptly sent to them. It was accompanied by an address that Madison wrote, and by various other papers, among which were documents concerning the Newburgh crisis, contracts made with the King of France, and the cogent answer by Hamilton to the objections of Rhode Island. Though the new fiscal recommendation was much aided by Washington's celebrated letter, sent in June to the Governors of the States, the measure did not immediately or later receive the necessary ratification.

Hamilton was not entirely pleased with Washington's communication to the States. "I wished you," he wrote, "to declare to the people . . . your opinion of the present government, and of the absolute necessity of a change." He said, in somewhat reservedly praising the letter, "I trust it will not be without effect, though I am persuaded it would have had more, combined with what I have mentioned"!

## VI

It was while he was a member of Congress that Hamilton became lastingly convinced of neutral independence as the wise international policy for the United States.

Observing, on the part of American leaders, strong bias toward different foreign countries, he thought such partiality an ominous sign. Of his apprehension in this respect, he wrote to Washington: "We have, I fear, men among us, and men in trust, who have a hankering after British connection. We have others

whose confidence in France savors of credulity. The intrigues of the former and the incautiousness of the latter may be both, though in different degrees, injurious to the American interests, and make it difficult for prudent men to steer a proper course."

To this adverse condition he referred again, March 24, 1783, in a letter to Washington regarding information from Lafayette that all the belligerent powers had determined the preliminaries of peace. "I congratulate your Excellency," said Hamilton, "on this happy conclusion of your labors. It now only remains to make solid establishments within, to perpetuate our Union, to prevent our being a ball in the hands of European powers, bandied against each other at their pleasure."

So strong was his belief in the importance of national pride and independence that when the American peace commissioners had thought it expedient to proceed counter to instructions and, ignoring France, had made a separate, provisional treaty with England, Hamilton, in the consequent acrimonious debate on the floor of Congress, had vigorously aided in thwarting an attempt formally to censure their conduct. Even the fact that their treaty, in order that navigation rights on the Mississippi might be guaranteed, contained a secret clause, did not prevent him from pleading to have the commissioners and their work "commended in general."

Hamilton, always ready with constructive thoughts for the future, was the first to present in Congress the question of what should be the national peace estab-

lishment. He was at once made chairman of a committee on that subject. "Congress having appointed a committee," he wrote Washington in April, 1783, "to consider what arrangements it will be proper to adopt in the different departments with reference to a peace, I am directed by the committee to address your Excellency on the subject of the military department." Washington requested of all the principal army officers their opinions concerning what should be the permanent military establishment. Their responses to this request were compiled and sent to the committee. But there was no resulting congressional action: in September, 1783, from Princeton, the Commander-in-Chief wrote to Governor Clinton: "Congress have come to no determination yet respecting a peace establishment, nor am I able to say when they will." He did not find at Princeton, he declared, "a sufficient representation to discuss great national points."

Congress had left Philadelphia for the Jersey town on the 24th of the preceding June. Its removal was from consideration of both dignity and escape.

Eighty mutinous soldiers had come from Lancaster and, joining a similarly rebellious corps of troops at Philadelphia, had presented themselves in a threatening line before the State House. This action was a protest against Congress about pay. Threats had been sent in advance—threats referring to the bank and the Government. The soldiers, having formed their line in front of the State House on the morning of June 21, kept that position throughout the day, individuals among them now and then pointing muskets at the

windows of the congressional hall. There was offensive language by some of the men in uniform and considerable patronage of adjoining tippling-houses. Congress, though its business had been suspended early by general agreement, did not adjourn until three o'clock, the usual hour. Occasional, mock hindrance was offered as its members passed through the ranks of the soldiers.

That night Congress met again, at the State House, and after that its next convening, several days later, was at Princeton.

There had been a committee to prevent, if possible, the soldiers from coming to Philadelphia; and after the men from Lancaster arrived, another committee was formed to ascertain whether a removal of Congress could be avoided. In both instances, Hamilton was chairman. In vain he led in voicing the appeal of these committees to the President and Council of Pennsylvania for protection of Congress against the mutiny. The answer to this appeal was that the Pennsylvania militia should not take arms unless actual outrages were committed by the insurrectionists. When it was palpable that the State executive was but little concerned to guard and support the dignity of the Confederation, Hamilton joined in recommending the departure of Congress. But he was among the last to accept as necessary that drastic action.

In the tumult of criticism aroused by the hasty removal of Congress, the motive of desiring to have the capital nearer New York was imputed to Hamilton. The President of Pennsylvania, John Dickinson, publicly intimated that the imputation was true. In answer

to Dickinson, for whom he said he had "always entertained an esteem," Hamilton wrote a letter of appeal to whatever capacity that official had for unprejudiced memory and judgment. "I cannot forbear," he declared, "indulging my feelings so far as to enter into a few explanations with your Excellency, submitting the justness of them to the testimony of your own mind." Having gone to Philadelphia on business, and finding there a "current . . . strongly against Congress," Hamilton wrote asking Madison to send him copies of the two reports that he, for the committees, had presented concerning the events that caused the removal. "I intend," he said, "to give them to the public."

Adopting again the theme that he had espoused against Seabury nine years before, the delegate from New York, aroused by the circumstances of the congressional retreat from Philadelphia, wrote a paper under the title, *Vindication of Congress*. In it he did not attempt to palliate the governmental blunders that had characterized the period of the war; he confined his vindication to the Congress of which he was a member. Affirmatively discussing the question of whether Congress should have left Pennsylvania, he made a sure transition to the idea of "the entire disproportion between the means which that body" could constitutionally employ "and their responsibility."

Then, seizing the opportunity to emphasize his main and repeated insistence, Hamilton said: "In these circumstances, it is the duty of all who have the welfare of the community at heart to unite their efforts to direct the attention of the people to the true source of

public disorders—the want of an EFFICIENT GENERAL GOVERNMENT . . . and a CONFEDERATION capable of drawing forth the resources of the country.”

## VII

After the national Congress left Philadelphia in 1783, it became for a time a migratory body. Not until seven years later did it return to Philadelphia, where, with the exception of a brief meeting at Baltimore and a later withdrawal before British occupation to Lancaster and York, it had sat from its beginning to the date of the mutinous threat by resentful soldiers. Four months it remained in Princeton; then it removed to Annapolis, then to Trenton. New York welcomed it in January 1785, and there it held its sessions until, its organization meanwhile having been supplanted by the legislative department of a new government, in 1790 it resumed its old home at Philadelphia. Sectional feeling about the question of a permanent residence for Congress early appeared; and the plan of having two federal cities, one on the Delaware and one on the Potomac, though destined to be abandoned, in a spirit of compromise was adopted.

About a month after the removal to Princeton, having announced that he had “stayed the full time to be expected,” Hamilton retired from his post in Congress. According to a stipulation in the preliminary treaty, the British would soon be withdrawing from New York; and after that he and Betsey were to make their home in that city. Already an important law case had



been brought to him: in a litigation between members of the Livingston family, April, 1783, he was retained as counsel.

He was eager to get established in his profession; but had further delay been practicable, he would have liked going abroad on some diplomatic mission. Particularly he wished to visit France and have association again with his many friends of that country. In a very cordial letter he had recently assured Vicomte de Noailles: "There is no country I have a greater curiosity to see, or which I am persuaded would be so interesting to me as yours." Almost enviously he wrote to Jay: "I am preparing to take leave of public life, to enter into the practice of the law. Your country will continue to demand your services abroad."

Just as Hamilton was about to depart for Albany, a rumor came that a frigate had arrived in New York with the definitive treaty. "The members of Congress," he wrote Betsey, "are very pressing with me not to go away at this time, as the House is thin, and as the definitive treaty is momentarily expected." His letter to her was glowing with eagerness and expectation. "I give you joy," he said, "of the happy conclusion of this important work in which your country has been engaged. Now, in a very short time, I hope we shall be happily settled in New York. My love to your father. Kiss my boy a thousand times."

The rumor of the treaty proving groundless, Hamilton refused to be detained longer. "Having no future views in public life," he had reported to Governor Clinton, "I owe it to myself without delay to enter

upon the care of my private concerns in earnest." In his final letter from Princeton to the Governor, July 27, 1783, he said: "As it is not my intention to return to Congress, I take this opportunity to make my respectful acknowledgements to the Legislature for the honorable mark of their confidence conferred upon me by having chosen me to represent the State in that body. I shall be happy if my conduct has been agreeable to them."

A few months before Hamilton's retirement from Congress, Schuyler, at the time in Philadelphia, wrote his daughter: "Participate afresh in the satisfaction I experience from the connexion you have made with my beloved Hamilton. He affords me happiness too exquisite for expression. I daily experience the pleasure of hearing encomiums on his virtue and abilities, from those who are capable of distinguishing between real and pretended merit. He is considered, as he certainly is, the ornament of his country, and capable of rendering it the most essential services, if his advice and suggestions are attended to."

McHenry, who had entered Congress as a delegate from Maryland not long before Hamilton returned to his private interests, wrote his friend, in Albany: "The homilies you delivered in Congress, are still recollected with pleasure. The impressions they made, are in favor of your integrity, and no one but believes you a man of honor and republican principles. Were you ten years older, and twenty thousand pounds richer, there is no doubt but that you might obtain the suffrages of

Congress for the highest office in their gift. You are supposed to possess various knowledge, useful, substantial, and ornamental. Your very grave, and your cautious—your men who measure others by the standard of their own creeping politics, think you sometimes intemperate, but seldom visionary, and that were you to pursue your object with as much cold perseverance as you do with ardour and argument, you would be irresistible.”

While Hamilton awaited at Albany the departure of the British from New York he finished all official business that had been delegated to him by the Governor, and in a letter disclosed to Washington a vexed sense of not having received from Congress a recognition which he thought he deserved. “Your Excellency will recollect,” he wrote, “that it was my lot at York Town to command, as senior officer, a successful attack upon one of the enemy’s redoubts; that the officer who acted in a similar capacity in another attack, made at the same time, by the French troops, has been handsomely distinguished in consequence of it by the government to which he belongs; and that there were several examples among us where Congress have bestowed honors upon actions, perhaps not more useful, nor apparently more hazardous.”

It was in September of 1783, during the time which Hamilton was spending at Albany, that Congress smothered his first official measure for a constitutional convention. The nullifying report, relating to the historic recommendation that was composed by Hamilton

and adopted by the Legislature of his State in the summer of 1782, was that "it would be proper to postpone the further consideration of the concurrent resolutions of the Senate and Assembly of New York."

CHAPTER FIVE  
SINGLENESS OF AIM

“After the peace, I settled in the city of New York, in the practice of the law. . . . I became a member of the Convention which framed the present Constitution of the United States.”



## I

THE sixth article of the final Treaty, which was signed in September, 1783, and ratified by Congress the following January, contained the stipulation: "That there shall be no future confiscations made, nor any prosecutions commenced against any person or persons, for or by reason of the part which he or they may have taken in the present war; and that no person shall, on that account, suffer any future loss or damage, either in his person, liberty, or property."

While the Treaty was pending, the State of New York passed its arbitrary Trespass Act, which authorized those whose property had been taken and held by Tories in places of British occupation during the war, to bring suits against them for back rent and damages.

Many of the Tories who in the years of war had used Whig property had done so by British military authority, but such authority the New York statute declared inadmissible as a defense in the kind of retroactive damage and rent suits it was framed to permit. Though this nullification of pleas based on military orders was sharply incompatible with Article Six of the Treaty, the State of New York did not repeal its Trespass Act when the definitive international agreement was accepted.

Not long after Hamilton, in November, 1783, opened an office at No. 57 Wall Street, he was con-

spicuous in the trial of a nationally significant test case under the Trespass Act.

Mrs. Elizabeth Rutgers, a widow, owned property in Maiden Lane, and during the war Benjamin Waddington & Company had occupied the premises under an order from the British commander. Upon the withdrawal of the British from New York, Mrs. Rutgers, a Whig, brought suit against the Waddingtons, who were Tories, for back rent. She engaged John Laurance as her lawyer, and the Waddington Company availed themselves of the services of Hamilton.

The case was tried in the mayor's court of New York. It excited intense popular interest and feeling, for throughout the city and the land a severe, retaliatory spirit toward the Tories prevailed. Mrs. Rutgers was the object of militant sympathy. The court-room was crowded with people who made her cause theirs. Animosity was stimulated by visible evidences of recent occupation by British soldiery of the very building in which the court was held.

The plaintiff's lawyer was sure that the day would be for him one of facile, popular victory. His statement to the court was, accordingly, not an argument, but was just an expeditious recital of what seemed obvious and indisputable.

Was it not so, he asked, that the New York Trespass Act prevented the introduction of British military orders as a defense against claims for the payment of back rent by Tories? Beyond question, he observed, that prohibition was within the clear purport of the Act. Therefore, he continued, it would not be neces-



sary for him to contend that the clients of Hamilton had no basis for their case, since their only defense was precluded by the acknowledged facts and the relevant statute. Was there any other law to be invoked? Surely not, said he, for this suit came manifestly and entirely under the recent Trespass Act of the Legislature.

Hamilton, then in his twenty-eighth year, had, according to one of Chancellor James Kent's appreciative descriptions of his career as a lawyer, a "clear, elegant, and fluent style, and commanding manner." In that description Kent said also: "He never made any argument in court without displaying his habits of thinking, resorting at once to some well-founded principle of law, and drawing his deductions logically from his premises." His reply to Laurance in the mayor's court was a distinguished instance of this method; in his argument he memorably appealed from specific law to principles of government and civilization.

The Trespass Act was, Hamilton declared, inconsistent with the Treaty. But that fact, he proceeded to show, disclosed the Act as being in defiance of constitutional authority, since by the Articles the Confederation had the sole right of forming treaties and alliances.

The Trespass Act was inconsistent also with the law of nations, he argued. How could the State of New York abrogate the international sanction that made a treaty of peace tantamount to a general amnesty?

Hamilton uttered a solemn warning that for the State to defy the Confederation would be to jeopardize the only Government the country had for its general

problems and needs; and he contended that to defy the law of nations would be to invite the contempt and hostility of the world.

The court, he acknowledged, could not repeal or nullify the Trespass Act; but, he maintained, refusal to make literal application of the law would not be nullification. For, he pointedly reminded the court, it is an ancient, established maxim that if "two or more laws clash, that which relates to the most important concerns ought to prevail." Furthermore, it was not to be supposed that the Legislature intended a violation of the federal authority and of the law of nations when they passed the statute in question, but if such defiant inconsistency "were intended, the act," he convincingly declared, "is void."

Having before him the points of his argument closely written on nineteen large pages, Hamilton spoke for several hours. Profoundly believing in the political wisdom and importance of the nationalistic principles he championed, he pleaded more as a citizen and statesman than as an advocate of clients.

James Duane and Richard Varick were, by the Governor's appointment, respectively mayor and recorder, and these men—the chief officers of the court—being of Continental views, Hamilton was sure that his argument would receive unprejudiced consideration. His expectation was not disappointed. The court decided in his favor, declaring that "no State in this union can alter or abridge, in a single point, the federal articles or the treaty."

## II

Hamilton's surprising victory in the mayor's court aroused a clamor of public resentment. Those believing in proscription of the loyalists were numerous, and at the tidings of the verdict Hamilton had won, fury possessed them. The city of New York resounded with wrath and commotion.

At an indignant general meeting an address to the people of the State was passed in which the protestants, though admitting "the immense ability and learning" of the young lawyer, sounded to the citizenry a call for the election of legislators who would protect the people from what was described as "judicial tyranny." The Legislature, already aggressively Whig in sentiment, became more so; and at its next session a resolution, aimed at Duane and Varick, was adopted, calling on the Council of Appointment to name "such persons mayor and recorder of the city of New York" as could be depended on to "govern themselves by the known laws of the land."

The proscriptive spirit toward the loyalists—which had the bitter memories of a long war as its justification and, in some cases, cupidity as its source—was, though particularly strong there, not confined to New York. It was numerously represented in all the States. Meetings of remonstrance against the Treaty were held in New Jersey; a committee of the Massachusetts Legislature, Samuel Adams being its chairman, reported that loyalists who had borne arms against the United States, or

had lent money to the enemy, should never be permitted to return to the States; and in Virginia the House of Delegates, expressing its anticipatory determination on the subject of the peace, had resolved that "vicious citizens who side with tyranny and oppression, or cloak themselves under the mask of neutrality, should at least hazard their property, and not enjoy the labors and dangers of those whose destruction they wished."

Though Hamilton was being lashed to excessive work by the urgency of his own concerns, he felt in his conscience that he ought to do what he could to temper this prevailing vindictiveness with the views of sober counsel. He said to intimate friends: "The Almighty has given me a good head, and thank God, he has also given me a good heart."

Declaring that the production came from one who had "more inclination than leisure to serve" the people, he wrote and published an earnest argument against proscriptive measures. Over the name "Phocion," the argument went forth rebuking "the doctrine of disqualification, disfranchisement, and banishment by acts of Legislature." His pamphlet evoked replies from "Gustavus," "Anti-Phocionite," "Mentor," and others. In answer to "Mentor," Hamilton as "Phocion" wrote a second discussion—a more considerable performance than the first, which had appeared with apologies for literary evidences of haste.

In both of his "Phocion" pamphlets Hamilton fearlessly espoused the basic principles that give stability to political society. His readers were called upon to

perceive that against loyalists measures were being proposed and enacted that probably would lead either to despotism or to chaos. He particularly emphasized the importance of the right to trial by jury and the necessity of adherence to the constitutions of government.

In the sweep and march of his powerful argument Hamilton made effective use of prediction and of history. "How wise," he said, "was that policy of Augustus, who, after conquering his enemies, when the papers of Brutus were brought to him, which would have disclosed all his secret associates, immediately ordered them to be burnt. . . . How laudable was the example of Elizabeth, who, when she was transferred from the prison to the throne, fell upon her knees, and thanking Heaven for the deliverance it had granted her from her bloody persecutors, dismissed her resentment." Referring to the future of the States, he declared: "'T is with governments as with individuals; first impressions and early habits give a lasting bias to the temper and character. Our governments, hitherto, have no habits. How important to the happiness, not of America alone, but of mankind, that they should acquire good ones!"

Even the foes of Hamilton were wont to acknowledge that he was without an equal in any contest in which pens were the weapons. Accordingly, after the "Phocion" papers appeared, five of his enemies agreed on engaging him in a kind of encounter in which pens would not be used. There was to be a series of five challenges, unless Hamilton should be killed before the issuance of the fifth.

Isaac Ledyard, author of the "Mentor" pamphlet,

upon becoming apprised of this murderous plan shattered it by directly accusing its authors of cowardice. Hamilton heard that "Mentor" had thus intervened in his behalf. When he was later informed of "Mentor's" identity, he cordially thanked his gallant literary opponent for having saved his life. He was surprised and puzzled by the reply he received—which was that the friendly deed was an exact requital. Neither then nor later could he remember the occasion of his having saved the life of Ledyard.

Gradually sentiment toward the loyalists changed. The utterances and pamphlets of Hamilton had a primary influence in effecting this return to a considerate attitude, and the young lawyer's fulfillment of the part he chose, that of defending the rights of the Tories, came to be appreciated as indicating high courage.

Hamilton had known that championship of the unhappy loyalists would reduce him in the estimation of many people; but when lawful order was at stake he was never afraid of the multitude and its immediate blame. To conciliate the people's favor by sacrificing or neglecting his reasoned principles was alien to his nature.

### III

The legal fraternity of New York City, at the time Hamilton began his practice there, included men of veteran abilities and others of sure promise. Two of its members—Robert Troup and Brockholst Livingston—were already intimate friends of the neophyte. Aaron Burr, also just starting upon a career as a lawyer in the

largest city of the State, was, though the two young men were often together in cases, Hamilton's rival for success. '

The partner of Hamilton was Balthazar De Heart, whose position in the joint office seems to have been that of a chief clerk. Since in that day there was no specialization in legal practice, Hamilton's professional work was of all kinds and in all courts. He also taught law: sons of ambitious parents were sent to him as students, the tuition being \$150 a year. Among these students, who served as clerks, were Pierre V. Van Courtlandt, Jacob A. LeRoy, and Dirk Ten Broeck.

None were more interested in the advancing welfare of the Hamilton family than were Mr. and Mrs. John Barker Church, then in Europe. Separation did not abate the expressive affection of the two sisters, Angelica Church and Betsey Hamilton. When the Hamiltons' first daughter was born, September, 1784, she was given her aunt's name, Angelica, and the aunt promised: "The next girl I make shall be called Betsey."

That he might have them opportunely, Mrs. Church was generously alert in procuring for Hamilton the latest important European books on government and finance. It was from her that he received the copy of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* which he used in writing his analytical discussion of that profound Scotchman's masterpiece.

Church, watchful for good business opportunities, engaged Hamilton to make an investigation and give a report on the proposition of organizing a bank in New York. Hamilton found that, under the leadership

of Robert Livingston, already a project was on foot to establish a land bank under an exclusive charter from the Legislature. Considering this plan "wild and impracticable," he reported to Church: "I thought it necessary not only with a view to your project, but for the sake of the commercial interests of the State, to start an opposition."

His method of opposition, he said, was that of convincing "the projectors themselves of the impracticability of their scheme" and showing "some of the most intelligent merchants" that a counter movement would be wise. The merchants, accordingly, obtained a subscription for a real money bank; many partisans of the original scheme were led, Hamilton wrote, to dismiss the thought "that the land bank was the true philosopher's stone that was to turn all their rocks and trees into gold"; and the competent young lawyer was chosen to frame the constitution of the Bank of New York. In directing the organization of this venture Hamilton made honest but handsome provision for the interests of his friend and client, J. B. Church.

In one of her letters to her sister, written in January, 1784, Mrs. Church inquired concerning the Society of the Cincinnati, which recently had been organized. "Is your lord a Knight of the Cincinnati?" she asked.

France and America were soon echoing with vehement protests against the constitution of that fraternity. Jefferson, writing from Paris denounced it as portending "an hereditary aristocracy." Ædanus Burke, of South Carolina, seeing in it "an hereditary peerage," said in a pamphlet: "Its branches will end in Tyranny



. . . the country will be composed of only two ranks of men, the patricians, or nobles, and the rabble." Mirabeau, influenced by the pamphlet of the Carolinian, described the Cincinnati as "that nobility of barbarians, the price of blood, the off-spring of the sword, the fruit of conquest." So violent was the hostility to the order that Washington, its first president, was almost willing, he wrote, to make the concession of "abolishing the society at once." Hamilton, a very active member, though not so disturbed by this general storm as Washington was, thought it entirely proper to omit the succession of primogeniture, "a principle," he said, "inconsistent with the genius of a society founded on friendship and patriotism."

John Barker Church was very rich. He was a friend of the Prince of Wales, and with Mrs. Church was accepted in the Carlton House set. In contrast to the Churches' financial condition, the Hamiltons were relatively poor. Writing to Gouverneur Morris the assiduous attorney remarked, "Legislative folly has afforded so plentiful a harvest to us lawyers that we scarcely have a moment to spare from the substantial business of reaping"; but though his application was unremitting, as yet his income was small. Nicholas Cruger, who sixteen years before had given an eager boy a place in his St. Croix counting-house, lived in New York, and at his advice Hamilton wrote to Messrs. Semphill & Company, of the West Indies, asking them to collect a small legacy that had been left to him. This bequest was a share in property which a relative, John Hallwood, had inherited from the estate of a grand-

father, James Lytton. "Dr. Hugh Knox," said Hamilton, "can give you further information on the subject."

A draft, in 1785, from the lawyer's elder brother, James Hamilton, was cheerfully paid; and a letter that went from New York to St. Thomas, West Indies, where the brother lived, was reassuring and affectionate. In it, referring to the draft for £50, Hamilton wrote: "I wish it was in my power to desire you to enlarge the sum; but, though my future prospects are of the most flattering kind, my present engagements would render it inconvenient for me to advance a larger sum. My affection for you, however, will not permit me to be inattentive to your welfare." He was planning to have his brother come to the United States. "My object," he promised, "will be, by and by, to get you settled on a farm." With true solicitude he asked, "But what has become of our dear father?" The several letters he had sent to St. Vincent had not relieved his anxiety, he said, for they had brought no reply. "My heart bleeds," declared Hamilton, "at the recollection of his misfortunes and embarrassments. Sometimes I flatter myself his brothers have extended their support to him. . . . Should he be alive, inform him of my inquiries; beg him to write me, and tell him how ready I shall be to devote myself and all I have to his accommodation and happiness."

Very sparkling letters continued to come to the Hamiltons from Angelica Church. Her sentiment for her brother-in-law was a frank adoration. Writing to his wife she declared: "I am really so proud of his merit and abilities. that even you, Eliza, might *envy my*

*feelings.*" In a letter to Hamilton she said: "Church's head is full of Politics, he is so desirous of making one in the British House of Commons, and where I should be glad to see him if he possessed your eloquence."

#### IV

Early in the year 1786, the Legislature of Virginia passed a resolution which proved to be one of the most important steps in human progress.

This resolution was a call to the Legislatures of the several States, asking the appointment of delegates to a general convention. Regulation of trade and commerce between the States was to have been the subject of the meeting. Commissioners of Maryland and Virginia had lately conferred at Mount Vernon and Alexandria, seeking agreement relative to navigation rivalries on the Potomac, the Pocomoke, and the Chesapeake Bay. Virginia's historic call for a general convention was an outcome of the report made by these commissioners.

Hamilton, hard at work as a lawyer in New York, was immediately interested in this proposal of a convention. He was among those who saw in the plan a possibility which might lead to a reconstruction of the national Union. Why should not the object of the convention be broadened by adding to it the main political concern of the exigent times?

It was with this statesmanlike thought in mind that Hamilton again turned to public affairs. He had loyal friends in the New York Legislature, and he knew

that through his influence with them he could have a directing part in reference to that State's pending decision on the call from Virginia. Among these friends were Lord Stirling's wealthy son-in-law, William Duer, and William Malcolm, and Robert Troup—men who, realizing Hamilton's signal competence, acknowledged themselves willing to make his advice their policy. They, with other supporters of Hamilton and his plans, succeeded in rallying votes enough to get favorable action in the Legislature when the call from Virginia was introduced for final consideration.

The Legislature named six delegates, Hamilton being one of them. He and Egbert Benson, attorney-general of the State, were the two who went to the epochal convention.

Annapolis had been selected as the place for the meeting. The assembling of the delegates, September 11, 1786, was marked by disappointment; for only five of the States—New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, and New York—were represented. John Dickinson, then of Delaware, was elected chairman. After an exhaustive discussion it was decided that since from eight of the States there were no delegates, the meeting could not proceed in transacting the business with which it was charged.

But the twelve men present agreed in the idea of proposing a subsequent convention which should consider, not commercial interests, but the existing Union with a view to revision.

These twelve delegates determined to recommend such a convention in a report to their respective States,

and a committee was named to prepare the report. Though he was not a member of this committee, Hamilton was asked to write the important communication. This he did, but the phraseology he used did not reflect the positiveness of his own ideas respecting the Confederation and the need of submitting it to change. Madison and Edmund Randolph—who was at that time conservative regarding the Confederation—were delegates from Virginia, and when Hamilton was writing the report for the committee, Madison, referring to Randolph, said to the representative from New York: “You had better yield to this man, for otherwise all Virginia will be against you.”

The report that Hamilton wrote went to the five States represented at Annapolis, recommending the plan of having a convention in Philadelphia on the second Monday of the next May, asking those States to appoint delegates to the proposed meeting, and requesting them to seek the concurrence of the other States in doing likewise.

• This movement was to the persevering Hamilton a welcome promise that he was soon to witness a fulfillment of the end to which for years he had devoted his advocacy and endeavors. On September 3, 1780, in his twenty-fourth year, he had written the prescient letter to Duane, advising that a constitutional convention be held in the interest of obtaining a more energetic government; and since that time he had found and used all possible opportunities for advancing the cause of strengthening the Union. The Annapolis recommendation, calling a general convention of the States, seemed

to him a clearing of the ground for the structure he hoped to see raised.

The convenient time had come; and so Hamilton turned his attention almost entirely from his own interests to the patriotic aim of accomplishing a reconstruction in the general Government. Having obtained election to the Legislature, he was prepared to bring the State of New York to a positive stand for a thoroughgoing change in national affairs.

From January 12 to April 21, 1787, the Legislature was in session in New York City, and during most of this time, having convened on February 2, Congress was also meeting there. Hamilton's purposes regarding the proposed Philadelphia convention—known in their fullness only to himself—appertained to action in both bodies: the Legislature, of which he was the outstanding member, and Congress. Though he had no official connection with Congress, he at once became, through the successful exercise of influence, an invisible but leading force in its deliberations.

During the early months of that great year, 1787, for many continuous weeks Hamilton moved toward his objective with intense labor and without rest. He realized that the presence of the two governmental bodies in one place at that critical time was replete with the possibilities and issues of national destiny. He saw that Governor Clinton and his numerous corps of State officeholders were vigilantly against any measures for national sovereignty in New York affairs, and he learned that Congress, jealous of its own authority, had received notice of the Annapolis proposal with much

condemnation of it as anarchic and illegal. He straightway undertook, therefore, the difficult task of conciliating Clinton men and of converting influential members of Congress.

Dinners and receptions were a part of his strategy: he and Betsey made their house in Wall Street a hospitable center for political friends and foes. Of Rufus King, who then was in Congress, he said, "I revolutionized his mind"; and it was over the genial board that this conquest of persuasion was achieved.

The speeches of Hamilton also advanced his cause. His eloquence never more earnest and effective, the dominant young legislator was on the floor of the State Assembly again and again. Many of the Congressional delegates daily visited the Legislature, drawn there by the brilliancy of his impassioned appeals.

When Hamilton's tireless, versatile campaign was over, the results of it were triumphal. Congress had resolved to send to the States, in language stronger than that of the Annapolis proposal, a call for the Philadelphia convention. The Legislature of New York had elected delegates to the convention, and though two of the three representatives were Clinton men, the State had not failed to choose Hamilton.

## V

With the exception of two adjournments, one for two days and the other for ten, from May 25 to September 17, in the year 1787, the Federal Convention that framed the Constitution was in continuous ses-

sion at Philadelphia. Hamilton, who had surpassed all others as to leadership in producing the Convention, was present from May 10, the stated date for the opening, until June 29, when he returned to New York. After that time he was at Philadelphia on July 13, and again for several days following August 13, and then from September 6 through the closing sessions.

It was the urgency of his personal affairs that caused his attendance to be intermittent. Clients had been complaining of neglect. Declaring him culpably inadvertent concerning the interests which they had submitted to his charge, Stephen Delancey and Israel Wilkes had written him sharp letters. He gave in reply the excuse: "Whatever inattention may have appeared towards you, was solely owing to the continual hurry in which my engagements, for a long time past, have kept me." Since the Virginia call for the Annapolis Convention had gone forth, he had prodigally given of his time and strength in response to what seemed to him to be the public needs. In the summer of 1787, therefore, after more than a year of constant service toward making the Philadelphia Convention possible, the time had come when he realized that he must devote more attention to his own necessitous concerns. His family was increasing. Betsey having become the mother of a second son, Alexander, there were three children requiring provision.

But when Hamilton was absent from Philadelphia on business in New York, he kept in responsive and influential contact with the Convention through Washington and Rufus King.



The speech concerning which Gouverneur Morris is reported to have said that "it was the most able and impressive he had ever heard," was Hamilton's supreme utterance as a deputy to the Convention. It was delivered on June 18, and the presentation of it consumed several hours.

The intellectual level of the audience imposed a standard the high severity of which was a distinct inspiration to the speaker. The States, knowing well that they faced a crisis, had been careful to send competent leaders and acknowledged statesmen to be their representatives in the Philadelphia meeting. With many of these men Hamilton had been associated in political services and relations of former days.

Of his colleagues in the memorable Congress of 1782, thirteen were deputies to the Convention: Daniel Carroll, John Mercer, and James McHenry, from Maryland; Nathaniel Gorham, from Massachusetts; Gunning Bedford, from Delaware; James Madison, from Virginia; Hugh Williamson, from North Carolina; John Rutledge, from South Carolina; Oliver Ellsworth, from Connecticut; Thomas Mifflin, George Clymer, James Wilson, and Thomas Fitzsimons, from Pennsylvania.

Besides Madison, of Hamilton's fellow commissioners at the important Annapolis meeting there were present as deputies in Philadelphia, William Houston, of New Jersey; Edmund Randolph, of Virginia; Richard Bassett, George Read, and John Dickinson, of Delaware.

Prominent among the deputies were the Morrises,

Robert and Gouverneur, with both of whom Hamilton, from former associations, was on terms of intimate acquaintance. William Livingston, who, in 1772, had welcomed the ambitious young stranger from St. Croix, was among the New Jersey delegation. Rufus King, happy in his new but strong fealty to Hamilton, brought credentials from Massachusetts. Washington, who loved the provocative deputy from New York as a father loves a son, was president of the Convention by unanimous choice.

Many of them his loyal friends, these men, former associates of Hamilton's, were, excepting Houston and Mercer, individually characterized by William Pierce, a delegate from Georgia, who wrote his impressions of nearly all those constituting the Convention. 'Pierce believed that at Philadelphia "the wisest Council in the World" was meeting; and graphically he portrayed its members.

Of Gorham, the Georgian said: "He is eloquent and easy in public debate, but has nothing fashionable or elegant in his style." Ellsworth he appraised as "a Gentleman of a clear, deep, and copious understanding." King he lauded by saying, "Take him *tout ensemble*, he may with propriety be ranked among the Luminaries of the present Age." Livingston he appreciated as "equal to anything, from the extensiveness of his education and genius." Clymer he found to be "a respectable Man, and much esteemed." He saw in Robert Morris "an able Financier, and a worthy Patriot." He recorded that Fitzsimons was "a Merchant of considerable talents." From hearing Dickinson he

said: "With an affected air of wisdom he labors to produce a trifle." He thought McHenry "a Man of specious talents, with nothing of genius to improve them." He observed that Bassett was "a religious enthusiast, lately turned Methodist." He stated that Carroll was "a Man of large fortune, and influence in his State." He heard Read's speeches and expressed the criticism: "His powers of Oratory are fatiguing and tiresome to the last degree." He succumbed to Randolph's charm, saying, "He has a most harmonious voice, a fine person and striking manners." Mifflin seemed to him "well informed and a graceful Speaker." He liked Williamson; "in his manners," he remarked, "there is a strong trait of the Gentleman." Wilson, he soon realized, was thorough in a scholarship that could "trace the causes and effects of every revolution . . . down to the present time." Describing the eloquent Rutledge he confessed: "But in my opinion he is too rapid in his public speaking to be denominated an agreeable Orator." He listened to Bedford's declamation and derived from it the opinion: "He is a bold and nervous speaker . . . warm and impetuous in his temper, and precipitate in his judgment." Gouverneur Morris so stirred him to admiration that he wrote: "Every species of talents combine to render him conspicuous and flourishing in public debate." Writing of Madison he registered the finding: "Every person seems to acknowledge his greatness."

The deputy from Georgia wove this praise for the brow of Washington: "Like Gustavus Vasa, he may be said to be the deliverer of his Country;—like Peter the

great he appears as the politician and the States-man; and like Cincinnatus he returned to his farm . . . and now only seeks for the approbation of his Country-men by being virtuous and useful."

Pierce wrote of Hamilton as being "deservedly celebrated for his talents." Though he thought his subject's manners "tinctured with stiffness, and sometimes with a degree of vanity," yet he admitted that under the influence of Hamilton's eloquence, which came in language "sometimes didactic like Bolingbroke's at others light and tripping like Stern's," it was the common experience to have "the Heart and Head sympathize in approving him." Pierce, though himself not learned, was aware of the intellectual depth of the man he thus portrayed. "Colo. Hamilton," he noted, "enquires into every part of his subject with the searchings of phylosophy, and when he comes forward he comes highly charged with interesting matter, there is no skimming over the surface of a subject with him, he must sink to the bottom to see what foundation it rests on." That he was "of small stature and lean," the observer said of this "finished Scholar" and "convincing Speaker" whom he described.

The Convention, having been in session nearly a month, heard a new and startling note on June 18, when the historically resounding speech by Hamilton disclosed his thoughts on the existing political crisis. His basic contention was: "The general power, whatever be its form, if it preserves itself, must swallow up the State powers."

The principle of the Confederation, that of a league

of sovereignties, was, he said, fallacious. He drew his argument on this point from all of history and from recent, instructive experience in the United States. A league of States was unquestionably insufficient, but could there be, he asked, a general government by the people of the entire nation? In the way of such a plan he saw two obstacles—the independence of the States and the extent of the geographical area to be included.

After discussing these obstacles, Hamilton unfolded to the Convention his philosophy regarding the abstract question of adequacy in governmental organization. His own belief was, he said, that hereditary monarchies were the most practicable of all governments. Quoting Necker for confirmation, he praised the British Constitution as being incomparably more productive of national stability than any other in the world.

But he was sure, he declared, that the people of the States would oppose accepting a hereditary monarchy as their form of government. Accordingly he urged the Convention to propose to the citizenry a constitution for a national republic. In concluding his profound discourse, he expressed the opinion: "We ought to go as far in order to attain stability and permanency, as republican principles will admit."

In the course of his speech Hamilton read a draft of what he had conceived as a suitable constitution for the United States. A President and senators, according to this bold plan, should be chosen for life. They should, however, be subject to impeachment. In the election of them a property qualification should be re-

quired for suffrage. Members of an Assembly should be elected by general, popular vote. Governors of the States should be appointed by the President.

In debate on June 21, William S. Johnson, whom Pierce described as "one of the first classics in America," adverting to Hamilton's speech made the statement: "Though he has been praised by everybody, he has been supported by none." Several men in the Convention—Randolph, Dickinson, Gerry, Charles Pinckney—were known to be hardly less appreciative of the British Monarchy than was Hamilton; and his suggestion of a property qualification for suffrage was consistent with election laws then obtaining in most of the States. What seemed to the deputies, at the time, the outrageous idea in Hamilton's speech was his proposal that the President should appoint the governors. Hamilton found it impossible to sympathize with the prevailing opposition to this feature of his plan, for, having been born abroad, he loved none of the States as his native land.

Early in the proceedings of the Convention, the Virginia Plan, conceived by Madison, was presented by Randolph. It contemplated discarding the Confederation for a national government in which representation of the States should be proportional to their numbers of inhabitants. This plan was favored by most of the large States and those seemingly destined to be large. Most of the small States came forward in support of the New Jersey Plan. That proposal was one to amend the Confederation but to retain its provision for equal

representation of all the States. The baffling task of the Convention was that of achieving a satisfactory harmony of the respective principles of these two plans, and more than once failure seemed inevitable. What prevented a surrender was the knowledge that the alternative to success on the part of the Convention was the certainty of national disintegration and chaos.

Hamilton was one of the leaders in nobly phrasing the victorious eventual compromise. Elected by ballot, he was a member of the Committee on Style; and much of the most salient wording of the Constitution was taken from the draft he read as he made his celebrated speech some time after the beginning of the Convention.

"If," the scholarly Johnson from Connecticut is said to have observed, "the Constitution did not succeed on trial, Hamilton was less responsible for that result than any other member, for he fully and frankly pointed out to the Convention what he apprehended were the infirmities to which it was liable. And if it answered the fond expectations of the public, the community would be more indebted to Hamilton than to any other member; for, after its essential outlines were agreed to, he laboured most indefatigably to heal those infirmities, and to guard against the evils to which they might expose it."

## VI

Recording the incidents of the day on which the Convention finished its work, Washington wrote in his diary: "The business being thus closed, the Members

adjourned to the City Tavern, dined together and took cordial leave of each other." As the weary veterans dispersed, starting for their respective homes, they knew that ahead were the greater battles regarding the Constitution. The document framed by them had yet to be adopted by the country.

The deputies realized that both in making the Constitution and in devising a procedure for its ratification, they had exceeded their legal authority. Driven by necessity, they had tacitly agreed among themselves to propose and guide a peaceful revolution in government.

The call of Congress for the Convention had contemplated only a revision of the Articles, and, in varying language, so had the calls and credentials issued by the several States. But instead of amending the Articles, the delegates had composed a new Constitution.

Moreover, though the Article on amendments to the existing Government required the unanimous concurrence of the State Legislatures, these bold deputies, by their action in Philadelphia, were asking the Legislatures to call special conventions on ratification and were saying that the adoption of the Constitution by only nine of the States should render it effective and binding.

The Articles, the call of Congress, the instructions of the several States, all made requisite the agreement of Congress in whatever the Convention might report; but the delegates to the Constitutional Convention, acting in revolutionary determination, had resolved on merely expressing to Congress their opinion that it



ought to participate in getting the States to adopt a new government.

Hamilton thought that ratification should be contingent on the assent of Congress. He believed that at least some degree of organic continuity should be preserved between the old Government and the new. His motion representing that belief, submitted just before the Convention adjourned, was considered reactionary and unwise. Whether advisable or not, it was in perfect accord with his temperamental aversion to anarchic procedure. "I think it wrong," he declared, "to allow nine States to institute a new Government on the ruins of the existing one." Connecticut alone, however, voted in support of his motion.

When the venerable Franklin—whom Pierce described as "the greatest phylosopher of the present age"—presented his appealing resolution, just prior to adjournment, that all the deputies, irrespective of their personal objections, should sign the Constitution, Hamilton spoke favoring the conciliatory proposal. "No man's ideas," he frankly said concerning the Constitution, "are more remote from the plan than my own are known to be; but is it possible to deliberate between anarchy and convulsion on one side, and the chance of good on the other?" Randolph, Mason, and Gerry refused, however, to sign, and issued elaborate statements in justification of their intransigent stand.

One reason why Hamilton was anxious that the signing should be by individuals, and not just by States, was that only under this ruling could he be included in the endorsement of the Constitution. During all of the

previous sessions, the presence of more than one deputy from a State had been necessary to give that State representation and a vote. New York, therefore, had not been represented in the Convention since July 10, for on that day Yates and Lansing, fellow delegates with Hamilton, had left for home not to return. From that time, when Hamilton was at the Convention he was permitted to speak and to participate in the work of committees, but he could not vote. All the voting in the Convention was registered as of States, the names of individuals not appearing in the recorded tables of ballots. If this rule had been applied at the time of the final endorsement of the Constitution, neither the name of New York nor that of Hamilton would have appeared in the historic roster.

When Yates and Lansing withdrew from the Convention they published a statement of alarm against the probable outcome of the deputies' work. Hamilton, hearing that the doughty Clinton had expressed approval of this protesting statement, without hesitation wrote an open letter excoriating the Governor. A reply, signed "Republican," assailed Hamilton for having impugned the wisdom of the chief magistrate of the State.

Hamilton's answer was on the grounds of there being "little danger that the spirit of the people of this country will ever tolerate attempts to seduce, to awe, or to clamor them out of the privilege of bringing the conduct of men in power to the bar of public condemnation." Clinton himself then entered the fight

as "Cato," and when Hamilton made rejoinder as "Cæsar," into the lists charged Yates, who became "Brutus" in defense of Clinton. Fusillades of articles and pamphlets went back and forth between sides on the subject of the Constitution.

Those who constituted the party of opposition to adopting the proposed government were known first as Federalists, then as Federal-Republicans or Anti-Federalists. From New York, in May, 1788, a Committee on Correspondence of this party sought to consolidate between States a general offensive against adoption. In addition to producing their own literature of attack and defense, the objecting party in New York gave wide distribution to Richard Henry Lee's challenging series of *Letters from the Federal Farmer*, in which the Virginian repudiated what had been done by the deputies at Philadelphia.

All efforts were made, in New York, to discredit Hamilton, who was the acknowledged leader in that State of the movement for ratification. Writing to Washington concerning the party of resistance, he said: "Among many contemptible artifices practiced by them they have had recourse to an insinuation that I *palmed* myself upon you, and that you *dismissed* me from your family. This I confess hurt my feelings, and if it obtains credit, will require a contradiction." Washington promptly answered: "I do . . . explicitly declare that both charges are entirely unfounded."

In the next letter Hamilton sent to Mount Vernon he wrote: "The constitution proposed has in this State warm friends and warm enemies. . . . The inclosed is

the first of a series of papers to be written in its defense." In using for the immortal series of articles the title *Federalist*, Hamilton had undertaken, with what proved effective strategy, to deprive the opposition movement of its rallying party name. Addressing the "People of the State of New York," the author, "Publius," had said in the opening number: "I propose, in a series of papers, to discuss the following interesting particulars: *The utility of the UNION to your political prosperity— The insufficiency of the present Confederation to preserve that Union— The necessity of a government at least equally energetic with the one proposed, to the attainment of this object— The conformity of the proposed Constitution to the true principles of republican government— Its analogy to your own State constitution—and lastly, The additional security which its adoption will afford to the preservation of that species of government, to liberty, and to property.*"

Some of these pertinent and enduring dissertations were first published in the *New York Packet*, others in the *Independent Journal*, the remainder in the *Daily Advertiser*, or in the original collected edition. The eighty-five writings appeared within a period of seven months, at an average rate of about three every week.

Hamilton sought from Jay, Madison, and Gouverneur Morris, collaboration in the enterprise, but Morris, doubtful about the Constitution, declined. Jay wrote five of the papers. Madison and Hamilton wrote three jointly, and of fourteen numbers Madison was

the sole author. The authorship of ten of the contributions is not certainly known. At least fifty-three of the eighty-five classic essays were produced by the unaided endeavor of Hamilton.

He wrote the first of the papers in the cabin of a sloop as he journeyed on the Hudson River. While meeting the demands of the printer, often for three or four articles each week continuously, he had upon him his busy practice as a lawyer, and also the responsibility of leadership through an important active period in the political transactions of New York. It was one of the several epochal situations in which Hamilton evinced his singular genius for diverse simultaneous work, all of it quick and thorough and excellent. That signal genius, during the critical months just after the Convention, when the young leader was hurried with many tasks, made for him an imperishable monument, *The Federalist*.

"I have delivered to Mr. Madison, to be forwarded to you," wrote Hamilton to Washington in August, 1788, "a set of the papers under the signature of Publius, neatly enough bound to be honored with a place in your library." In his reply Washington predicted: "When the transient circumstances and fugitive performances which attended this crisis shall have disappeared, that work will merit the notice of posterity . . . so long as they shall be connected in civil society."

## VII

When he left home to take his place in the New York Convention which was either to reject or adopt

the Constitution, Hamilton must have known that in all the course of his thirty-one eventful years he had not before faced so critical a battle as was that which then loomed before him.

Though his city favored, the State opposed ratification. It was by a majority of only three votes and after a bitter dissension that the Legislature had taken steps for assembling the Convention which was to decide whether New York should enter the proposed new government. Though eight States had adopted the Constitution, in New York opposition to it was general and militant. The *Albany Journal*, on the eve of the Convention, stated that the delegates elected throughout the State were, at least, two to one against adoption.

On June 17, 1788, the delegates convened at Poughkeepsie. When Robert Livingston, a Federalist, one of Hamilton's colleagues from New York, proposed that, according to the precedent of other States, there be no voting on the Constitution until after it had been read and "considered clause by clause," there was unanimous assent.

The Anti-Federalists were one in purpose to defeat adoption, but they feared that precipitate action by them in the Convention might cause the southern district to secede from the State in determination separately to enter the Union. It was partly because of the existence of this apprehension, that the Federalists were able to gain the advantage which the passage of Livingston's motion was for them.

Also, in their move for the postponement of voting, the Federalists were aided by the fact that just then two

other States, New Hampshire and Virginia, were likewise weighing in convention the issue of the new government.

It was virtually certain that New Hampshire would accede, but the opposition in Virginia was so formidable that there the outcome eluded prediction. If Virginia, the most populous of the States, should reject the Constitution, that event would impressively sanction the refusal of New York to enter the Union. Clinton, the stoutest Anti-Federalist in the North, had written to abet the cause of Patrick Henry, the titanic Southern opponent of ratification, and all of Clinton's party were inclined to postpone the intended rejection at Poughkeepsie at least until after receiving final tidings from Virginia.

Hamilton saw when he reached Poughkeepsie that apparently his cause was beaten in advance of the fight. Against every delegate who favored the Constitution, there were, as predictions had foretold, two of the opposite persuasion. He was resolved, however, to defy and overthrow this mathematical certainty of defeat.

He realized that during the time before the final action—which would probably be weeks—he must win votes. But in order to win enough votes it would be necessary, he knew, to convert leaders. Between Clinton and himself, however, there was a wall of bitter antagonism. Yates and Lansing, after his breach with them at Philadelphia, were also beyond the reach of his influence. But Melancthon Smith and Samuel Jones, both having sway as talented representatives of the opposition party, seemed to him susceptible of fair

conquest. He would lay siege to their minds, and strive to enlist their patriotism in the cause of ratification.

Before leaving for the Convention he had taken advantage of the possibility of assistance through favorable news from New Hampshire and Virginia. To John Sullivan, president of New Hampshire, he had written: "Permit me to request that the instant you have taken a decisive vote in favor of the Constitution, you send an express to me at Poughkeepsie. Let him take the *shortest route* to that place, change horses on the road, and use all possible diligence. I shall with pleasure defray all expenses, and give a liberal reward to the person." A few days before writing to Sullivan, he had asked in a letter to Madison: "The moment *any decisive* question is taken, if favorable, I request you to dispatch an express to me, with pointed orders to make all possible diligence, by changing horses, etc. All expense shall be thankfully and liberally paid." He also had said to Madison: "God grant that Virginia may accede."

Hamilton had in the Convention the support of two markedly strong men—John Jay and Robert Livingston. But Jay did not often take part in the debates, and when he did speak his uninspired style must have seemed out of consonance with the sense of crisis which pervaded the sessions. Livingston, the chief rhetorician of the meetings, spoke often. He definitely hurt the Federalist cause, however, on three occasions: once when, with an evident sense of authority as a Livingston, he lectured the delegates on the meaning of aristocracy; again when he rather cruelly made sport of



an opposition speaker for having committed the blunder of an inconsistent trope; and then when he stirred a number of gentlemen to indignant speeches by declaring that the reasoning of the Anti-Federalists was childish. "To what shall I compare it?" he asked. "Shall I liken it to children in the market-place, or shall I liken it to children making bubbles with a pipe?"

Hamilton first took the floor on Friday, the 20th of June. From that time until the Convention was over he was the chief and superb contender on the Federalist side.

He was the only man present who had signed the Constitution at Philadelphia; and he was conversant, from all his thought and work on the Federalist papers, with the arguments for and against the governmental plan under discussion. None of the delegates at Poughkeepsie was his equal in mental parts and in power of address. In consequence of his singular position and of the importance of his cause, an awareness of responsibility mastered him. His ability and strength were pressed to their utmost reach toward getting the Constitution adopted. Days and weeks passed, but Hamilton remained the central figure in the debate, answering questions and showing the reasons for his stand. He would speak until exhausted and then speak again. Only once did he lose control of himself: when Clinton made his first speech Hamilton's equanimity changed into rage. "It is," he said in replying to the Governor's argument, "a species of reasoning sometimes used to excite popular jealousies, but is generally discarded by

wise and discerning men." Though yielding not an inch in debate respecting the Constitution, he showed disarming consideration of all his foes save Clinton. Toward Melancthon Smith and Samuel Jones he unfailingly expressed an understanding spirit. "There are," he wrote to Madison on June 27, "some slight symptoms of relaxation in some of the leaders, which authorizes a gleam of hope, if you do well, but certainly I think not otherwise."

On June 24 the word came that New Hampshire had entered the Union; and on July 3 the same information was delivered to Hamilton regarding Virginia.

Hamilton made dramatic use of this news from sister States, but with what effect he could not tell. The voting would be the indication of failure or success, and the voting was yet to take place. He could only work and speak on in hope. Pleading for adoption he said to the Convention: "I presume I shall not be disbelieved, when I declare that it is an object, of all others, the nearest and most dear to my own heart." Those listening to his speeches felt his earnestness, while marvelling at his power, and were deeply stirred. Colonel Daniel Huger of South Carolina was a visitor in the Convention, and describing the effect of Hamilton's utterances he wrote: "Tears were in the eyes of the audience. I did not conceive it possible for man to speak so." James Kent was also there, and he remembered that Hamilton "urged every motive and consideration that ought to sway the human mind in such a crisis," and "touched with exquisite skill every cord

of sympathy that could be made to vibrate in the human breast."

On July 16, the Federalists, by presenting a motion for adjournment until September, made the first trial of the comparative strength of the two parties. The motion was overwhelmingly rejected, and the Anti-Federalists were confirmed in their confidence of victory. Duane, a Federalist, then boldly made a motion for ratification. By a large majority his motion was defeated. There was further voting, in which the opposing party—preparing an intended victory through conditional ratification—invariably cohered.

Between sessions Daniel Chipman, in Poughkeepsie for the day, called to see Hamilton. "I found him alone," said Chipman, "and took the liberty to say to him, that they would enquire of me in New York, what was the prospect in relation to the adoption of the Constitution; and asked him what I should say to them. His manner immediately changed, and he answered: 'God only knows. Several votes have been taken, by which it appears, that there are two to one against us.' Supposing he had concluded his answer, I was about to retire, when he added, in a most emphatic manner: 'Tell them, that the Convention shall never rise, until the Constitution is adopted.' "

On July 19 a draft of a conditional ratification was presented by Lansing, his proposal being tantamount to rejection. Hamilton, in the supreme effort of his Poughkeepsie fight, spoke against Lansing's plan. For an hour and twenty minutes he argued and appealed. When he had finished speaking, he saw Melancthon

Smith get up and heard him say that Hamilton had convinced him of the wisdom and propriety of unconditional ratification. After that, Samuel Jones on the 23rd made a motion that the Constitution be adopted, and on the 26th by a final vote of thirty against twenty-seven the motion was carried in the affirmative.

Governor Clinton went back to New York knowing that he had not been one of the Anti-Federalists whose minds had been changed at Poughkeepsie, and the elated Hamilton returned to lay before the Congress of the Confederation his State's adoption of the new Constitution.

## VIII

Much civic excitement characterized the period during which the subject of ratification was of topmost interest throughout the country, and party strife often eventuated in acts of violence. In several of the States perfervid citizens showed this disposition to substitute force for persuasion, but the belligerent temper was peculiarly prevalent in New York.

At Albany, the news that Virginia had joined the ranks of the adopting States precipitated a riot. On July 3, the day the tidings from the South were received, the Federalists read the Constitution at the fort and fired a salute. The next day, the Anti-Federalists publicly burned, at the same place, the document which their opponents had so exultantly proclaimed. A battle ensued, in Green Street, from which many of both sides came off with wounds.

In the city of New York a mob of Federalists, incensed at the opposing views of Thomas Greenleaf, attacked and damaged the press from which he issued his paper. The same party of rioters threatened the home of Gen. John Lamb; but upon finding themselves faced with stern preparations for defense, they abandoned their lawless purpose.

While the spirit of hostility was at its height, Col. Eleazer Oswald, whose political stand was against adoption, challenged Hamilton to a duel. The cartel was borne by another anti-adoptionist, Major John Wiley. It was in consequence of Hamilton's moral reluctance about the custom of duelling that the affair was honorably adjusted without resort to meeting with weapons.

Celebrations of favorable news from their respective State conventions were usual among the citizens and in the towns of adoptionist persuasion. Following ratification by ten States, there was a day, July 4, 1788, when Philadelphia was made a stage of pageantry. Francis Hopkinson planned the community demonstration, and the impressive result was both a work of art and a general expression of patriotism.

Citizens in New York began to think of a parade even more spectacular than that which had occurred in Philadelphia. Major Pierre L'Enfant, who had come from France about a decade before, was engaged to have in readiness, awaiting triumphal tidings from Poughkeepsie, the most dramatic municipal celebration of the times.

But days went by and the signal from Poughkeepsie did not come. The only favorable news received was: "Hamilton is still speaking." Suspense became unendurable. It was decided therefore that the parade should march in anticipation of the victory by Hamilton and his fellow delegates. Such a manifestation as was planned would strengthen the Federalist cause in the Convention, and also express confidence in Hamilton and those who were battling at his side. Therefore, on July 23, three days before the ratification at Poughkeepsie, New York brought to pass L'Enfant's grand dream of acclaiming the Constitution.

From the Fields, where on another July day, fourteen years before, the oratory of a strange West Indian youth had been heard, the parade started.

It proceeded through the town to a great pavilion, which was eight hundred feet long and six hundred feet wide and which was partly covered by a dome supporting Fame in an impressive symbolism of Welcome to the New Era. The Congress of the Confederation and its president, Cyrus Griffin, were at the center of tables upon which were plates for a multitude of six thousand.

In the procession were cars bearing workmen plying their respective trades. The coopers were making a cask which signified the Constitution. The carpenters were building an eleventh column, "New York," for the federal structure. The upholsterers were producing, for the first President, a chair of state, and the coach-makers were constructing his chariot. The printers had their presses, from which were issued sheets of pa-

triotic songs. Noah Webster, famous for advocacy of strength in government, marched with the learned company of the Philological Society. Robert Troup headed a large number of lawyers, and Nicholas Cruger, though still a merchant, was pleased, driving six oxen, to take his place in the division of farmers.

Drawn by six white horses came the climactic feature of the day, the federal ship *Hamilton*. The crew were forty seamen; and the veteran Commodore Nicholson was chief officer. Thirteen guns were fired from the frigate at dawn, and the same salute resounded often during the day.

Late in the afternoon the good ship *Hamilton*, hailed by thousands, was brought back for mooring in the Fields.

## IX

Before and after the adoption of the Constitution, the whole country was sure that by all wisdom and prudence Washington must be President.

In this consensus Hamilton earnestly joined. He realized, however, that Washington's reluctance in the matter was so deep as to endanger the general hope and expectation. "You know me well enough, my good sir," Washington had written to his New York friend, "to be persuaded, that I am not guilty of affectation when I tell you, that it is my great and sole desire to live and die in peace and retirement on my farm."

This expression from Mount Vernon aroused in Hamilton his typical spirit of aggressive accomplishment: he sent in reply an argumentative dissertation,

written in terms of unhesitating candor. "In a matter," he said to Washington, "so essential to the well-being of society as the prosperity of a newly-instituted government, a citizen of so much consequence as yourself to its success has no option but to lend his services if called for. Permit me to say it would be inglorious in such a situation not to hazard the glory, however great, which he might have previously acquired."

Washington, who was ever disposed to accept from Hamilton a directness of speech which from another would have been offensive, answered: "I am particularly glad in the present instance, that you have dealt thus freely and like a friend."

For the Vice-Presidency of the intended government, a number of men were more or less seriously considered. In the list of these were, among others, John Rutledge, Henry Knox, John Hancock, Benjamin Lincoln, George Clinton, and John Adams. After deliberation Hamilton decided to support John Adams for the office. One of his expressed reasons for this decision was: "He is certainly a character of importance in the Eastern States; if he is not Vice-President, one of two worse things will be likely to happen. Either he must be nominated to some important office, for which he is less proper, or will become a malcontent, and give additional weight to the opposition to the government."

But though Hamilton was willing to have Adams as Vice-President, he was not willing to brook any risk of having him in the place which, by the general preference, was reserved for Washington. Fearing the pos-





*Photograph by Brown Bros.*

THE FEDERAL SHIP, HAMILTON, IN THE NEW YORK CELEBRATION, JULY 23, 1778



sibility that the two men might each be given the same number of votes by the electors, he effectively advocated the plan of dividing the support that Adams was thought likely to receive.

John Adams never forgave Hamilton for resorting to that precautionary expedient.

In January, 1788, Hamilton was elected, the second time, a member of the Congress of the Confederation. Considerations of policy caused this election to be very acceptable to him. Might not members of the old, vanishing government unexpectedly impede the new? Hamilton thought it prudent to be present with influence and a vote as Congress turned to the business of preparing for the régime that was to take its place.

He desired, moreover, to have New York chosen by Congress as the temporary seat of the government that was about to come into existence. That choice, he thought, would strengthen the Federalist party in New York State, where it was particularly weak. Philadelphia strongly competed for the distinction that Hamilton sought for his own city, but on September 13, after two months of resourceful exertion, the New York delegate won his objective. Writing to Theodore Sedgwick of Massachusetts, who had stanchly helped him in his endeavor for the selection of New York, Hamilton announced: "We are making efforts to prepare handsome accommodations for the session of the new Congress."

A chief concern of Hamilton's was that there should be a strong Federalist representation in the legislative

department of the great political venture. He hoped Madison would be sent from Virginia, and said to him: "If you are not in one of the branches, the government may sincerely feel the want of men who unite to zeal all the requisite qualifications for parrying the machinations of its enemies." But Hamilton himself was disinclined, he declared, to serve as a representative in either House.

Election of senators for New York was delayed by a party impasse in the Legislature, but eventually two Federalists were chosen—Rufus King and Schuyler. King, failing of election in Massachusetts, had moved, with his aspirations, to New York. The Livingstons, though supporting Schuyler, opposed King. They preferred a candidate of longer residence in the State; but Hamilton, under obligation to King, and confidently liking him, insisted on his being elected.

This insistence, though successful, proved of dear cost to Hamilton and his future. The Livingstons, a family of much political strength, were alienated from him and, more and more, became his foes.

"He was capable," declared a writer who knew him, "of inspiring the most affectionate attachment, but he could make those whom he opposed fear and hate him cordially."

New York was not represented among the electors of the first President. Hamilton was chagrined at this fact, and felt that it was attributable to Clinton's delay in convening the Legislature. Soon after the meeting of that body, which was largely under Clinton's influence, it defeated Hamilton, February of 1789, in his candi-

dacy for election again, as a delegate to the old Congress during the few months of its final term.

This defeat was humiliating to the young leader of the Federalist party in New York, and in his resentment he decided that the State must have, to take the place of Clinton, another governor. To gain this end he formed an alliance with Aaron Burr, who was a moderate Anti-Federalist, and, he and Burr coöperating, advocated the election of Yates.

Hamilton went from place to place making campaign speeches, wrote addresses to the voters of the State, and, as "H.G.," published a series of letters against Clinton. But Clinton, though his usual majority was portentously reduced, was elected again. "There can be," said Hamilton, "no rational hope of future union or concord under his auspices."

At the inauguration of the President, April 30, 1789, Alexander Hamilton, though not an official, by all appropriateness was honorably prominent. He was among those on the balcony of the old City Hall, changed to Federal Hall, where the oath was administered. Near him, in the small company of notables, were two of his first American friends—Elias Boudinot and Dr. John Rodgers. At the subsequent ball, given a week later, Hamilton and his patrician wife were looked upon in admiration as they exchanged greetings with their New York friends and with distinguished sojourners at the capital. Two days before the ball, in response to Washington's request, Hamilton had submitted in writing his ideas "upon

the etiquette proper to be observed by the President" on all occasions. Washington, expressing appreciation, said: "The manner chosen for doing it is most agreeable to me. It is my wish to act right; if I err, the head and not the heart shall, with *justice* be chargeable."

## CHAPTER SIX

### PRIME MINISTER

“In that office I met with many intrinsic difficulties, and many artificial ones, proceeding from passions, not very worthy, common to human nature, and which act with peculiar force in republics. The object, however, was effected of establishing public credit and introducing order in the finances.”





## I

NOT long after the first inauguration the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence came round, and everywhere hopeful expectations of the new Government particularly inspired the usual celebration.

In New York, the Society of the Cincinnati directed the observance. They made plans for a great meeting in St. Paul's Church, choosing the eloquent Hamilton as the orator of the day. Washington, then under the watchful care of his physician. Dr. Samuel Bard, was too ill to attend, but in the audience that filled the church the legislative branch of the Government was represented by virtually all its members. Among the women present were Mrs. Washington, Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Jay, and Mrs. Hamilton.

Before the meeting, a committee of the Cincinnati waited on the President at his home. Their spokesman, Baron Steuben, said: "Under your conduct, sir, this band of soldiers was led to glory and to conquest, and we feel confident that under your administration our country will speedily arrive at an enviable state of prosperity and happiness." Washington, asking the committee to bear his greetings to the Society, replied: "Assure them that I received their congratulations on this auspicious day with a mind constantly anxious for the honor and welfare of our country, and can only say

that the force of my abilities, aided by an integrity of heart, shall be studiously pointed to the support of its dignity and the promotion of its prosperity and happiness."

Hamilton's oration in St. Paul's Church was a eulogy on the life and services of a noble soldier who had died three years before in Georgia—Gen. Nathanael Greene. "There is no duty," said the speaker, "that could have been assigned me by this Society which I should execute with greater alacrity than the one I am now called upon to perform. All the motives capable of interesting an ingenuous and feeling mind conspire to prompt me to its execution." Greene had been, as Hamilton said, among those closest to him in the "endearing character of friends," and Hamilton affectionately revered his memory. It was with no grudging or reluctant praise, therefore, that the orator reviewed the career and described the character of the dead leader. "We have a succession of deeds," declared Hamilton, "as glorious as they are unequivocal, to attest his greatness and perpetuate the honors of his name."

In the affecting course of his eulogy on Greene the speaker voiced the lament: "The sudden termination of his life cut him off from those scenes which the progress of a new, immense, and unsettled empire could not fail to open to the complete exertion of that universal and pervading genius which qualified him not less for the senate than for the field."

A few months after these words were uttered the man who had spoken them was himself engaged in

stupendous official labors for the welfare of the new empire.

After the Act of September 2, 1789, that created the Department, Washington immediately appointed Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury.

In the House there had been a prolonged debate on whether the Treasury should be under a board or an individual, and speaking for the plan of a plural control Elbridge Gerry had said: "I would be glad to know of the gentlemen, who are for vesting these powers in a single person, where they will find the man who is capable of performing the duties of a financier? . . . We had once a gentleman who filled such a department, and I believe the only one in the United States who had knowledge and abilities by any means competent to the business; but that gentleman is now employed in another branch of the Government, and cannot be called to this trust." Robert Morris, to whom Gerry referred, was at that time a senator from Pennsylvania.

Washington had hoped that Morris, an experienced financier, would consent to take the chief place in the Treasury Department, but Morris was disposed to urge the appointment of Hamilton to that critical office. "You will be no loser," Morris assured Washington, "by my declining the secretaryship of the treasury, for I can recommend to you a far cleverer fellow than I am for your minister of finance, in the person of your former aid-de-camp, Colonel Hamilton. . . . He

knows everything, sir; to a mind like his nothing comes amiss."

When the post was offered to the New York lawyer, aged thirty-two, several of his friends sought to convince him that he should not accept it. With regret they saw him assume the responsibilities of a position that seemed to them, even in their appreciation of his powers, so difficult as inevitably to promise failure. Hamilton, writing to Lafayette about the appointment, said: "In undertaking the task I hazard much, but I thought it an occasion that called upon me to hazard."

The President, having obtained Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury, appointed Henry Knox as Secretary of War, Edmund Randolph as Attorney-General, and Thomas Jefferson as Secretary of State.

The office to which Hamilton was named required that he lift the country from financial prostration and enable it to stand and advance. From the Confederation the new Government had inherited an appalling bankruptcy; and the problem of this beggarly situation the House, on September 21, in a resolution that he present to the next session of Congress a plan for the restoration of the public credit, referred to Hamilton. The House also called upon him to report at once on the current expenses, and to devise ways and means of getting money for the immediate demands. While he was formulating both temporary and permanent financial measures, he organized anew the old Treasury Department, introducing an adequate system of accounts and converting to effective order the inefficiency and confusion that had obtained for several years.

In making his permanent financial plan,—set forth soon afterward in his epochal first Report on the Public Credit,—he was inflexibly insistent that there be no repudiation of any foreign or domestic debts, principal or interest, incurred by the former Government. He proposed that the new Government should offer to exchange its own securities for the Continental certificates, in the original amounts; and—an audacious design—that the new Government should assume the war debts of the several States. The means for the complete funding of all the old obligations were, he was sure, easily within the fiscal reach of the young but growing nation.

During the months of this constructive preparation and achievement, in the intensity of his concentration Hamilton was indefatigable and almost sleepless. Oblivious to all else but his momentous task, he manifested again that peculiar abstraction which was his intermittent characteristic. A storekeeper at Kinderhook saw a man passing his shop to and fro, and thought that the pedestrian, who was intently talking to himself, was demented. The man of the queer behavior, it came to be known, was the Secretary of the Treasury.

There were those who, in all good conscience, sought to obtain from Hamilton at this time, in the confidence of friendship, profitable knowledge respecting government certificates. "From your situation you must be able to form with some certainty an opinion concerning the domestic debt; will it speedily rise?" asked

Henry Lee. In making this inquiry Lee freely left the ethics of the case to Hamilton's judgment. "Nothing," said he, "can induce me to be instrumental in submitting my friends to impropriety."

The answer given by Hamilton unfeignedly reflected his character. "I am sure," he declared, "you are sincere when you say that you would not subject me to an impropriety, nor do I know that there would be any in answering your queries; but you remember the saying with regard to Cæsar's wife. I think the spirit of it applicable to every man concerned in the administration of the finance of a country."

## II

Monday, the 12th of April, 1790, was a day of supreme crisis in the career of Alexander Hamilton. On that day his cardinal proposition that the national Government assume the Revolutionary debts of the several States was defeated in the House of Representatives.

Though the legislators, fearing consolidation of the branches of the new Government, had denied Hamilton the advantage of appearing in person to present orally his Report on the Public Credit, yet, before his defeat on the issue of assumption, the other salient features of his Report had been victoriously approved.

There had been no objection to his recommendation relative to funding the foreign debt. Even James Jackson of Georgia, a most watchful and fluent enemy to whatever was advised by the Secretary, did not object to the policy of making full provision for the federal

debts owed abroad. "The high regard I have," he explained, "for the nature and circumstances of the foreign debt, induced me to let the first proposition pass without any animadversion."

There had been determined and varied objection, however, to the Secretary's recommendation that the federal domestic debt be funded; but in the voting on that issue the opposition had lost its battles. Jackson and Scott had taken the lead for postponing the matter, Jackson mentioning "a few months," Scott implying an indefinite period. Jackson, alarmed over the "demon of speculation" in public securities, counseled: "If we consent to this proper and reasonable delay, our constituents will be prepared for our decisions, and a stop will be put to the speculation: or if any man burns his fingers, which I hope to God, with all the warmth of a feeling heart, they may, they will only have their own cupidity to blame." Scott, admitting that Hamilton's plan for funding the domestic debt did "great honor to the officer who framed it," in contending for delay insisted: "But it is incumbent on us to examine its principles before we adopt it." The postponement, however, was carried in the negative.

Then had arisen the live question of discrimination between the original holders of federal certificates and the subsequent purchasers. On this subject Madison, mindful of the fact that many of the original holders of certificates were Revolutionary soldiers who had sold them at a low price, presented the resolution: "That . . . the present holders of public securities which have been alienated, shall be settled with ac-

according to the highest market rate of such securities; and that the balance of the sums due from the public, be paid in such proportion to the original holder of such securities." Hamilton, in his Report, had anticipated and condemned the kind of plan contained in Madison's motion. "The nature of the contract," he had said from characteristic honesty, "is that the public will pay the sum expressed in the security, to the first holder or his assignee. Every buyer, therefore, stands exactly in the place of the seller." In two historic speeches, Madison, erudite and persuasive, defended the proposition that equity required the adoption of his plan. But his idea was overthrown by a substantial majority; and with it went down every other scheme of discrimination in the payment of national securities.

In the first voting on the critical issue of assuming the State debts, victory had still been with the banners of Hamilton.

The vote had been taken on March 9, in the Committee of the Whole House, the Secretary having used all his influence in rendering his side ready and strong for the parliamentary encounter. On March 8, the day before the voting, William Maclay, an observant antagonist, described in his journal "the rendevousing of the crew of the Hamilton galley." This sign of preparation moved Maclay to remark: "It seems all hands are piped to quarters." The preparation was urgently necessary: opposition to assumption, as a titanic debate had shown, was weighty and formidable. Such was the case inevitably; for State sovereignty was involved in the issue, and also, the fact stood that some



of the States had more of Revolutionary indebtedness than others, and, furthermore, it was true that the States were already dealing, each in its own way, with the obligations they had respectively incurred during the war. But Hamilton, by dint of watchful and untiring leadership, had, on the first vote, in the Committee, won for assumption.

"At length," wrote the hostile Maclay, "they risked the question and carried it, thirty-one votes to twenty-six. And all this after having tampered with the members since the 22d of last month [February], and this only in committee, with many doubts that some will fly off and great fears that the North Carolina members will be in before a bill can be matured or a report gone through."

Maclay's evident hope about the members from North Carolina—whose State had but recently entered the Union—had amply come true. Their votes, on March 29, had prevented assumption from passing in the House and had sent it back to the Committee. In the Committee the previous debate had been recapitulated, the second contention not less intense and mighty than the first.

On the evening of April 9, according to Maclay, there was a meeting of "the Secretary's party," and Maclay heard it rumored that "they had determined to risk an action" the next day. A senator, he went into the House to witness the important proceedings. "Dressed and attended," he wrote, "to see the event of the day, but it was put off by consent."

He was present again, however, on that critical Mon-

day, the 12th, when Hamilton's party did risk a vote on assumption and were decidedly beaten. The champions of the measure—Maclay as a gratified witness was sure—were stunned, resentful, hopeless in their defeat. "Fitzsimons first recovered recollection," the exulting Senator reported, "and endeavored to rally the discomfited and disheartened heroes. . . . The Secretary's group pricked up their ears, and Speculation wiped the tear from either eye. Goddess of description, paint the gallery; here's the paper, find fancy quills or crayons yourself."

But the faint hope that Fitzsimons thus inspired soon languished, and the prevailing opinion was that at least for the second session of the First Congress, then current, the defeat of April 12 had obviated Hamilton's assumption proposal. Apparently, assumption having been rejected, there was nothing left for Congress to do before adjournment except to decide if possible the difficult question of the residence of the Government.

Debate on that irrepressible question had occupied almost a month of the first session, but the debate had not been decisive. Where was the permanent capital to be? What place should be the temporary capital while the permanent residence was being established? Should the vote of the old Congress stand, that made New York the temporary capital? Repeated attempts had been made, in bargaining for the two prizes, the temporary and the permanent capital, to form a political combination that would be determinative of the tempting residence question; but again and again, on



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**PHILIP HAMILTON**



the verge of voting, the proposed coalition would crumble.

Hamilton saw, in this general legislative disposition to barter, a providential chance for bringing his assumption measure to victory.

That measure, he strongly felt, must be adopted without delay. Its adoption was indispensable to his financial plan and to his policy of adding centralization and energy to the Union. He believed that by taking part in the bargaining relative to the capital he could determine the vexed question of where the residence should be. He was confident, therefore, that the residence of the Government was a prize which he could offer for votes in support of his assumption program.

The two leaders through whom the Secretary of the Treasury elected to trade were Robert Morris of Pennsylvania and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia.

In response to an intimation from Hamilton that a conference was desired, Morris suggested an early morning walk together on the Battery. "I went," related Morris, "and found him *on the sod before me.*" Jefferson, regretfully looking back over the bargaining, chronicled: "Hamilton was in despair. As I was going to the President's one day, I met him in the street. He walked me backwards and forwards before the President's door for half an hour. He observed . . . that an appeal from me to the judgment and discretion of some of my friends, might effect a change in the vote, and the machine of government, now suspended, might be again set into motion."

The next day the hospitable Virginian gave a din-

ner, destined to be famous, at which Hamilton and a few others were the guests. Before that dinner was over, Hamilton had pledged himself that Philadelphia should be the temporary capital and that the permanent residence of the Government should be on the Potomac. As payment for doing this he had received assurance of votes enough, in both the Senate and the House, to change the fate of his assumption plan from defeat to triumph.

In Maclay's journal for July 21, 1790, this record, pertaining to the Senate and assumption, was entered: "They carried the bill against us—fourteen to twelve. It is in vain to dissemble the chagrin which I have felt on this occasion."

On July 27, Oliver Wolcott, Jr., auditor in the Department of the Treasury, wrote his father: "Yesterday, the question for assuming the State debts was carried in the House by a majority of six votes."

### III

On March 31, 1790, Judge Ædanus Burke of Charleston, the fearful monster of whose thoughts and dreams was the Society of the Cincinnati, made a furious oratorical attack on Hamilton. The text for his remarks he found in Hamilton's eulogy on General Greene. In sonorous wrath he declared that the Secretary had aspersed, in his speech on Greene, the Revolutionary militia of South Carolina. Maclay, the Senate having adjourned early, was present in the lower branch of

Congress when Burke delivered his philippic. "A violent personal attack," he noted, "which the men of the blade say must produce a duel." The next day, Good Friday, a note was sent to Burke, in which, after briefly but clearly showing that the phrase, "*mimicry of soldiership*," used regarding Greene's position on the "*plains of Springfield*," was "neither . . . applicable to the militia of South Carolina in particular, nor to *militia* in general," Hamilton said: "Having thus, sir, stated the matter in its true light, it remains for you to judge what conduct, in consequence of the explanation, will be proper on your part."

A subsequent incident Maclay also chronicled in terms of lively description. On June 28, Congress being still in session, the Pennsylvania delegation gave a dinner to which they invited various officers of the Government. "I could not help making some remarks," declared Maclay, "on our three Secretaries: Hamilton has a very boyish, giddy manner, and Scotch-Irish people could well call him a 'skite.' Jefferson transgresses on the extreme of stiff gentility or lofty gravity. Knox is the easiest man, and has the most dignity of presence. They retired at a decent time, one after another. Knox stayed the longest, as indeed suited his aspect best, being more of a Bacchanalian figure."

After the passage of the Residence Act, which was his part of the bargain for assumption, Hamilton began preparation for removal of his Department and home to Philadelphia. But before going he wrote several papers of importance.

One of these, signed "A Friend," was his *Address to the Public Creditors*. Reprehending as "not candid or just" all efforts to depreciate the public securities, he declared that holders of certificates should keep them, in full confidence that the recent pronounced improvement in price would continue. His appeal was based on a thorough explanation of what the Government had done and probably would do to provide funds for its obligations.

He wrote, also, an exhaustive opinion in response to an inquiry from the President addressed to members of the Cabinet. There being a threat of war between England and Spain, Washington, information having come that made the query pertinent, asked the question: "What, then, should be the answer of the Executive of the United States to Lord Dorchester, in case he should apply for permission to march troops through the territory of the said States from Detroit to the Mississippi?" Jefferson, urging discreet evasion, said no reply should be given to such a request. Hamilton, who thought it very important to preserve amicable relations with Britain, said permission should be granted. Adams, of whom Washington likewise asked advice, said permission should be refused. Fortunately, the crisis was only a matter of troubled anticipation. Washington, in that rare instance, did not have to choose among his advisers.

Hamilton, the same day he wrote to the public creditors, sent a communication to William Short, American *chargé d'affaires* at the court of France, giv-



ing comprehensive instructions relative to borrowing abroad fourteen million dollars on the authority and credit of the new Government.

These matters finished, on October 17, from New York, Hamilton wrote to Washington: "The papers of the Department of State and the Treasury . . . are on their way to Philadelphia. On the 20th, I propose with my family to set out for the same place."

He took the Pemberton mansion in the new capital, near Chestnut and Third. There and, later, at the Hills near Philadelphia, he lived during the remainder of his service as a member of the Cabinet.

The house he was leaving, 57 Wall Street, had been his home for a longer time than he and Betsey ever spent in any other residence. For seven years they had lived there, years of political victory, social brilliance, and domestic satisfaction. There his manly charm had won votes for his leadership and program; there Betsey's modest loveliness had received the appreciation of all distinguished society; there the Hamiltons, father and mother with three sons and a daughter, had been happy together in the ways of affection and under the best of fortune. Brissot de Warville, after dining at the house in Wall Street, pictured Mrs. Hamilton as a "charming woman, who joined to the graces all the candor and simplicity of the American wife." Her ardent husband often spoke and wrote to her in such words as these: "Indeed, my Betsey, you need never fear a want of anxious attention to you, for you are now dearer than ever to me. . . . You are all that is

charming in my estimation and the more I see of your sex the more I become convinced of the judiciousness of my choice."

As Hamilton looked forward to the meeting of Congress in December of that year, 1790, he did so with bold, determined plans. During the previous session he had but laid the broad foundations for his contemplated structure of governmental finance.

Between sessions, however, a weighty protest occurred against his measures. In November, the Legislature of Virginia, in a remonstrance to Congress, endorsed Patrick Henry's belief that assumption was "repugnant to the Constitution of the United States" and involved "the exercise of a power not expressly granted to the general government." This remonstrance strengthened Hamilton in his spirit of resolution. Referring to the proceedings in Virginia, he wrote to Jay: "This is the first symptom of a spirit which must either be killed, or it will kill the Constitution of the United States."

• The dauntless Secretary intended that at the imminent session of Congress "a further duty on foreign distilled spirits, and a duty on spirits distilled within the United States" should be exacted by law, and that a National Bank should be established. The making of final plans for a mint, concerning which he now and then conferred with Jefferson, he was disposed to postpone for the coöperation of a later session of Congress.

In December—1790—two men who were to be Hamilton's implacable foes came to Philadelphia from Vir-

ginia to enter Congress—James Monroe as Senator and William Branch Giles as Representative. Their coming, however, did not change the fact that opposition to Hamilton was far less in the third session of the First Congress—December 1790 to March 1791—than it had been in the second.

By the rule that merit in anything is more appreciated when successful, the victorious passage of his funding measures had tended to vindicate their constructiveness and had thus increased his prestige. Since the enactment of his recommendations by the previous session of Congress, indications of prosperity were everywhere manifest. Many who had been opposed to Hamilton's plans at the outset, were inclined to the view that what the Secretary of the Treasury had begun he should be allowed to complete. Jefferson, though ascribing Hamilton's decisive influence to the favor of legislative speculators in government securities, truly wrote, concerning the session of 1790-91, "The whole action of the legislature was now under the direction of the Treasury."

Early in February, 1791, Jefferson, deprecating Hamilton's proposed measures, said in a letter to George Mason: "However, all will pass—the Excise will pass—the Bank will pass."

The prediction of the apprehensive Secretary of State was not refuted by events. In both Houses the majority for Hamilton's excise bill proved overwhelming. In the Senate there was virtually no opposition to his bank bill, and in the House, though debate on it

was long, it was sustained by thirty-nine to twenty in the voting. The learned Madison led the opposition in the extended debate. "The power," he said, "exercised by the bill is condemned by the silence of the Constitution, and by the rule of interpretation arising out of the Constitution."

"Mr. Hamilton is all-powerful, and fails in nothing he attempts," wrote Maclay concerning the futility of resisting, in that memorable session of 1790-91, the Secretary of the Treasury. But those who had opposed the bank bill hoped for vindication and success through the President's veto. Washington had been impressed by Madison's objections to the bill; for he regarded Madison's opinions on questions of constitutionality as being particularly authoritative. He turned, therefore, to Madison and to the Cabinet for advice. Madison submitted to him a clear, profound statement of the opposing argument. In requiring the views of members of the Cabinet, Washington addressed Randolph first, then Jefferson, then Hamilton. Randolph and Jefferson agreed with Madison. "The reasons for their opinions having been submitted in writing," Washington notified Hamilton, "I now require, in like manner, yours on the validity and propriety of the . . . act."

Hamilton sent his illustrious reply to the President on February 23; and before March 3, the time of adjournment, Washington had signed the bill for a National Bank. He had found that for him there was no escape from the binding logic of Hamilton's statement of the principle of implied powers:

"Now it appears to the Secretary of the Treasury that

this *general principle is inherent* in the very *definition* of government, and *essential* to every step of the progress to be made by that of the United States, namely: That every power vested in a government is in its nature *sovereign*, and includes, by *force* of the *term*, a right to employ all the *means* requisite and fairly applicable to the attainment of the *ends* of such power, and which are not precluded by restrictions and exceptions specified in the Constitution, or not immoral, or not contrary to the *essential ends* of political society."

#### IV

After he had succeeded in obtaining the adoption of his magnificent financial plans,—involving assumption, no discrimination in the payment of the old certificates, arrangements for a national bank, and the complete funding of all debts,—Hamilton turned his attention to devising a policy for the economic development of the nation.

It was his opinion that the Government should both promote industry and, to an extent, give it direction. He was sure, against a pronounced belief of the times, that it would not be wise to let the industry of the country take its own course. Such a negative attitude on the part of the Government would result, he thought, in an advancement of agriculture disproportionate to the increase of manufacturing. He was not one of those who wanted the United States to remain, in economic resources and productiveness, prevaillingly a land of farms. The agrarian aspiration was to him

consistent with neither greatness nor safety for the nation.

In the summer of 1791, he undertook, as his first step toward establishing a national economic policy, the large but congenial task of preparing, for the next session of Congress, his Report on Manufactures.

One unfortunate day in that summer a seemingly distressed woman came to the Secretary's house. She told him that she was a sister of a certain G. Livingston of the State of New York. Her husband's name, she said, was Reynolds. He had deserted her, leaving her destitute. She asked Hamilton to assist her with money so that she might return to friends in New York. He was disposed to extend the aid she sought, but did not find it convenient to do so at the time of her visit. She gave him her address, and he promised to bring or send the requested money. That evening he went, himself, to take a bank-bill to her. Subsequently he resorted often to her lodgings; and during the months of that summer, Mrs. Hamilton with her children being in Albany, the Secretary's paramour frequently came to his home in Chestnut Street.

The concomitant fears of this clandestine immorality did not prevent Hamilton from proceeding with the work of preparing his Report on Manufactures. The Report was to be based on the facts of the manufacturing industry in households and in specialized establishments throughout the United States. The desired facts were gathered by a searching and comprehensive method. A letter was sent to a leading citizen in each of several States, and that citizen, by extensive cor-

respondence, acquired from towns and counties the knowledge sought by the Treasury Department.

In addition to superintending this complex assembling of facts, Hamilton, while experiencing torments of apprehension about his private conduct, took a main part that summer in projecting plans, with William Duer and others, for a national manufacturing center at Passaic Falls in New Jersey.

Reynolds, tiring of absence, returned to Philadelphia, and soon afterwards asked Hamilton to give him a position as clerk in the Treasury Department. This request the Secretary refused. Whatever may have been his temptation to accede, he would not admit such a worthless person as Reynolds to even a minor post of public responsibility. He put the man off with indefinite promises of future assistance.

During July and August the epidemic "scrip craze" of 1791-92 was at its height. Inflated by inordinate speculation, bank scrip and other stock reached such extremes of price in trading that many said, "Bank scrip is getting so high as to become a bubble," or, "'T is a South-Sea dream." This condition caused Hamilton much anxiety. "A bubble," he wrote to King on August 7, "connected with any operation is, of all the enemies I have to fear, in my judgment the most formidable."

By August 17 the "scrippomony" had begun to subside; but the autumn brought other events that also were ominous for the Secretary of the Treasury. On October 24, Aaron Burr—who had defeated General Schuyler through the influence of Hamilton's former

friends the disaffected Livingstons—entered the Senate. On October 31, the first number of the *National Gazette* appeared, Philip Freneau having come to Philadelphia to edit that paper and be a clerk under Thomas Jefferson.

In December Mrs. Reynolds wrote Hamilton a note in which she said: "I have not tim to tell you the cause of my present troubles only that Mr. has rote you this morning . . . and he has swore that If you do not answer It or If he dose not se or hear from you to day he will write Mrs. Hamilton." After interviews with Hamilton, Reynolds wrote him: "I have this preposial to make to you. give me the Sum Of thousand dollars and I will leve the town." Hamilton yielded the sum required.

Christmas approaching, in his personal correspondence of December, 1791, the Secretary of the Treasury—who rarely moralized—wrote his son Philip, away at school, a letter in which he said: "You remember that I engaged to send for you next Saturday, and I will do it, unless you request me to put it off, for a promise must never be broken, and I never will make you one which I will not fill as far as I am able; but it has occurred to me that the Christmas holidays are near at hand, and I suppose your school will then break up for a few days and give you an opportunity of coming to stay with us for a longer time than if you should come on Saturday. Will it not be best, therefore, to put off your journey till the holidays? But determine as you like best, and let me know what will be most pleasing to you."



Just after that Christmas, Hamilton received from Gulian Verplanck, chairman of a New York committee, this gratifying notice: "A number of your fellow-citizens, desirous of expressing the sense they entertain of the important services you have rendered your country, have raised by subscription a sum of money to defray the expense of a portrait of you, to be executed by Mr. Trumbull, and placed in one of our public buildings."

Reynolds, it appears, did not leave Philadelphia. Soon after the New Year he and Mrs. Reynolds wrote to Hamilton urging him to resume his wont of visiting their house. The immediate penalty for accepting their invitation was paid in the form of forced loans and apprehensive distress.

## V

Thomas Jefferson, on March 1, 1792, writing items for his famous journal, the *Anas*, recorded what had been spoken in his recent conversations with the President. In one of those interviews he had said to Washington that "the department of the Treasury possessed already such an influence as to swallow up the whole executive powers."

In a longer and more intimate talk, after hearing somewhat anxious expressions from the President in reference to "symptoms of dissatisfaction" with the Government, Jefferson had made an observation which appears in this excerpt from his *Anas*: "I told him, that in my opinion, there was only a single source of

these discontents. Though they had indeed appeared to spread themselves over the War department also, yet I considered that as an overflowing only from their real channel, which would never have taken place, if they had not first been generated in another department, to wit, that of the Treasury."

The watchful Hamilton well knew that he was being opposed by Jefferson. "He has predicted," declared the Secretary of the Treasury, "that the people would not long tolerate my proceedings, and that I should not long maintain my ground."

Conspicuously, much ground had been gained by the statesman against whom this threatening prediction was made. Of his proposing and espousal were nearly all the constructive measures that had been taken by the new Government. American history since 1789 was mainly the account of his resourceful leadership. He had achieved recognition abroad as "equal to the celebrated Mr. Pitt, and superior to the Prime Minister of any other court in Europe." Angelica Church, writing from London about an American newspaper, said: "It speaks of my Brother as he deserves, and as I and all who *dare* to know him think."

In relating the general appreciation of Hamilton and his accomplishments, the editor of the *Utica Patriot* retrospectively wrote: "Called by a beloved President to raise the sinking credit of a nation, to explore its resources, and direct its finances to an effective application, we were astonished at the facility with which he accomplished this arduous undertaking." The greatness of the Secretary was reflected even in Freneau's

malevolent reference to him as "the first lord of the Treasury." Possessing already the doctorate of laws, in 1792 Hamilton received further academic honors: Harvard and Brown, doing what had been done by Columbia, Dartmouth, and Princeton in former years, each conferred that degree. Acknowledged as the head of the Federalist party, he had such power that his leading opponents were finding it expedient to organize another party, the Republican, for resisting him and his aggressive course.

On April 9, 1792, Jefferson, more than skeptical about business conditions under Hamilton's régime, informed Colonel Humphreys: "The failure of Mr. Duer . . . has already produced some other bankruptcies, and more are apprehended."

A financial panic, introduced by a collapse in the extensive affairs of Hamilton's very rich friend William Duer, had followed the stock inflation of the year before. Hamilton, with the consent of the other Trustees of the Sinking Fund, endeavored to steady this anxious state of things by making large purchases of securities for the Government. He also issued direct appeals for faith in the financial soundness of American institutions. "Why . . . so much despondency among the holders of our stock?" he asked, writing the president of the Bank of New York. "Does Duer's failure affect the solidity of the government?"

The panic soon passed, but Duer's failure and consequent imprisonment transferred to Hamilton the extra burden of chiefly directing the manufacturing

enterprise at Passaic Falls and, also, because of his temperamental and invariable loyalty in friendship, caused him continuing grief. "I have experienced," he wrote to Duer on March 14, "all the bitterness of soul on your account which a warm attachment can inspire. . . . Assure yourself, in good and bad fortune, of my sincere friendship and affection."

James Madison had implied, speaking in the House of Representatives, that the Secretary of the Treasury had bought securities for the Sinking Fund with the purpose of protecting the speculators in the market. This insinuation indicated, on the part of the scholarly Virginian, a change of mind and attitude that Hamilton recognized with reluctance and accepted with poignant regret.

Through many years Madison and he had been friendly colleagues in the endeavor to bring a real Government into being. In those years Madison had endorsed the principle of assumption, and had opposed the idea of discrimination in payment of the national certificates. Upon taking charge of the finances of the new Government, Hamilton had supposed of course that Madison would support and aid him. "Aware," he wrote his friend Carrington, in May 1792, "of the intrinsic difficulties of the situation, and of the powers of Mr. Madison, I do not believe I should have accepted under a different supposition." But Madison, in the First Congress, flouting the Secretary's Report on the Public Credit, not only had brought for-

ward a scheme of discrimination, but also had opposed Hamilton's assumption measure.

In the letter to Carrington of Virginia,—which was written as a document for judicious political use,—Hamilton, dealing at length with the subject of the combined hostility of Jefferson and Madison to his leadership, and viewing the lately intensified friendship between the two men, deprecatingly said: "Whether any peculiar opinions of Mr. Jefferson's concerning the public debt wrought a change in the sentiments of Mr. Madison (for it is certain that the former is more radically wrong than the latter), or whether Mr. Madison, seduced by the expectation of popularity, and possibly by the calculation of advantage to the State of Virginia, was led to change his own opinion, certain it is that a very material change took place, and that the two gentlemen were united in the new ideas."

Hamilton was somewhat disturbed, furthermore, by the final outcome of the New York spring elections of 1792—for it was a result adverse to him as leader of the Federalist party.

Early that year there had been a movement for making Burr governor. Several of Hamilton's friends in New York had urged him to accept Burr, a mild Republican, as the Federalist candidate. They had suggested that Burr might be won over to the Federalist party and that his talents would strengthen its cause. But Hamilton had vetoed the proposal. Jay became the Federalist candidate against Clinton. The election

was, at first, a triumph for Jay, but a committee of the Legislature, deciding a bitter dispute over legal points with regard to the voting, declared on the ground of a technicality that Clinton was the victor.

The contest following the election caused an intense general excitement in which there were Federalist threats of civil insurrection. Concerning these threats Hamilton, true to his instinct for constitutional order, wrote to King: "It is not for the friends of good government to employ extraordinary expedients, which ought only to be resorted to in cases of great magnitude and urgent necessity."

Three days before Hamilton wrote his political letter to Edward Carrington of Virginia, Jefferson, quietly contriving to divest his cabinet associate of the ground he had so brilliantly gained, wrote to Washington giving him current criticisms of the Government. Since these strictures all related to the Secretary of the Treasury, the President, studiously concealing their real authorship, submitted them, as a list of twenty-one reputed complaints, to Hamilton, requesting the Secretary to answer them and send him the refutation.

Hamilton, always observant of style, must have known who the author of the objections was, for Jefferson's phrasing of them had been but slightly changed in the President's transcription. Washington soon received the answering argument for which he had asked. Though its preface was a burst of wrath, the reply itself was almost uniformly calm in its exhaustive treatment of the subjects under consideration.

The two objections upon which Jefferson placed greatest emphasis were: "that the national debt was unnecessarily increased, and that it had furnished the means of corrupting both branches of the legislature." Replying to the first of these charges, Hamilton said that if the principle were assumed "that the public debts of the different descriptions were honestly to be provided for and paid," it was "the reverse of true" that there had been "an artificial increase of them"; answering Jefferson's second main criticism, which ascribed legislative corruption, he declared: "This is one of those assertions which can only be denied, and pronounced to be malignant and false. . . . It is a strange perversion of ideas, and as novel as it is extraordinary, that men should be deemed corrupt and criminal for becoming proprietors in the funds of their country."

Hamilton's paper to Washington, "Objections and Answers," quite confirmed the President in his confidence respecting the embattled measures of the administration.

The argument of the Secretary of the Treasury was sent in August, about a month before it happened that Jefferson, hoping his aggressive colleague was soon to lose his ground, went to Mount Vernon for a visit. The Secretary of State, recording with disappointment the conversation of that visit, in giving Washington's views wrote: "He said, that as to that interested spirit in the legislature, it was what could not be avoided in any government, unless we were to exclude particular descriptions of men, such as the holders of funds, from all office. . . . He touched on the merits of the fund-

ing system, observed there was a difference of opinion about it. . . . That for himself, he had seen our affairs desperate and our credit lost, and this was in a sudden and extraordinary degree raised to the highest pitch."

## VI

As the season of the national elections of 1792 approached, Hamilton, desirous concerning the results, was militantly active regarding political developments.

"The ensuing session," he said, "will be an interesting one, and the next Congress will either anchor the government in safety or set it afloat." He was convinced that if the Republicans acquired sufficient numerical strength, they would proceed, headed by Jefferson, to undo the established funding system. He thought it of utmost importance that Washington continue to serve as President, and he considered it desirable that Adams be elected again.

Washington, longing for the quietude of Mount Vernon, was averse to remaining in official station. Retirement to Virginia seemed to him to be required by the mortal illness of his nephew, Major Washington, to whom he had given temporary charge of Mount Vernon, and by the failing state of his own health. He thought, moreover, that there might be a popular wish against his staying in the Government. Such Republican papers as Freneau's journal, the *National Gazette*, tended to make him uncomfortable in office: he found them exasperating beyond the extent of patience. "He



considered," in quoting him Jefferson wrote, "those papers as attacking him directly, for he must be a fool indeed to swallow the little sugar plums here and there thrown out to him." Washington's intimate friends and advisers urged on him, however, the wisdom and need of a second acceptance of the executive office.

None was more earnest in this urging than Hamilton. Using such language as was alien to him except when he was moved by a sense of crisis, he wrote: "I trust, sir, and I pray God, that you will determine to make a further sacrifice of your tranquillity and happiness to the public good." In a spirit that was deeper than mere formality he assured Washington of an "affectionate personal attachment."

The election drawing near, attacks on John Adams began numerously to appear in Republican papers. These charges, based mainly on his *Discourses of Davilla*, excoriated his imputed preference for titles and hereditary distinctions. Against him, for the second office in the Government, Republicans were proposing Jefferson, Burr, and Clinton.

Looking to other Federalists to safeguard Adams at the North, Hamilton announced: "My attention . . . will be directed to every State south of New York." He then exerted his influence and disseminated his opinions by means of letters to citizens of prestige in the various States he had taken as his field of political activity.

His campaign letters, though somewhat adapted to the views of their recipients, were not timidly phrased:

boldly he expressed his judgment of the different men who were being supported for election.

"As to Mr. Clinton," he remarked, "he is a man of narrow and perverse politics . . . opposed to national principles."

He declared in a summary statement concerning Aaron Burr: "In fact, I take it, he is for or against nothing, but as it suits his interest or ambition. . . I am mistaken if it be not his object to play the game of confusion, and I feel it to be a religious duty to oppose his career."

He said in reference to Jefferson: "That gentleman . . . is certainly a man of sublimated and paradoxical imagination, entertaining and propagating opinions inconsistent with dignified and orderly government."

In recommending the decision that had been reached by "the friends of the Government," he wrote: "They reason thus: 'Mr. Adams, like other men, has his faults and foibles . . . but we believe him to be honest, firm, faithful, and independent. . . . We will therefore support him as far preferable to any one who is likely to be opposed to him.' "

Hamilton's political activities during the summer and fall of 1792 were not confined to the writing of letters to individuals. Firmly believing that the funding system and the credit of the nation were at stake in the election, the Secretary of the Treasury decided to make presentments to the electorate, through the press. Accordingly in August he issued, for general publica-

tion by newspapers, a statement of the marked progress made since the date of his taking office "toward extinguishing the debts contracted under the former Government."

At once, under the signature "Mercator," an article appeared in Freneau's *Gazette*, torturing the figures of the Secretary's statement into an indication, the Secretary disdainfully noted, that the funding had "*produced* an *actual addition* to the public debt of more than one million and a half dollars"! Writing as "Civis," Hamilton contemptuously but adroitly answered "Mercator's" first paper and also his second. He demolished the contention of his critic by pressing and elucidating the question: "Is it not clear that, in the language and conceptions of Mercator, to *provide* for a debt and to '*produce*' it, amount to the same thing?"

After "Civis" had done the work of scornfully exposing a fallacy, Hamilton took the signature "Fact" and used it for an article in which he replied to those detractors and critics who accused the Secretary of the Treasury of being an advocate of the doctrine that "public debts are public blessings." To render his defense against this charge irrefutable, "Fact" had but to remind his readers of recommendations contained in the Report on the Public Credit. This he did, quoting: "Persuaded as the Secretary is, that the proper funding of the *present* debt will render it a national blessing; yet he is *so far* from acceding to the position . . . that 'public debts are public benefits,' a position *inviting to prodigality, and liable to dangerous*

*abuse, that he ardently wishes to see it incorporated . . . that the creation of debt should always be accompanied with the means of extinguishment."*

It was in order to protect the existing financial position of the Government, which in his judgment was jeopardized by the influence of Jefferson, that Hamilton decided to make newspaper warfare against him as the preëminent Republican leader.

The opening paper of his unmerciful campaign against his major antagonist was published in July, 1792, and from that time until well into December he continued to assail Jefferson in frequent, castigating articles. Various Republican writers—Madison by far the ablest of them—replied to Hamilton's attacks on their political chief. Though the warring contributors, according to the prevailing custom, wrote under pseudonyms, Hamilton's authorship, as did Madison's, clearly manifested itself to all readers. Neither of these main contenders purposed or expected that his anonymity would be a mask.

Hamilton, in support of his charges against Jefferson, submitted, with much scathing rhetoric, facts that made refutation of the strictures impossible. Therefore when he at length withdrew from the field, he did so having proved that Jefferson, at the time he gave Freneau a clerkship in the State Department, had participated in establishing Freneau's Republican paper, the *National Gazette*; that Jefferson, a member of the Cabinet, continued in many cases to oppose measures after they had become Acts of the Government; that at the time

the States were adopting the Constitution, Jefferson had advised against immediate ratification; that in 1787, Jefferson, then minister plenipotentiary to the French court, had suggested to Congress that if they saw that the public obligations of the United States were going to be poor debts for collection, they transfer to some innocent private company in Holland such of those obligations as were owed to France.

But in the course of this literary fray the weak spot in Hamilton's armor had counted against him. As a candidate for popular support and sanction he was irremediably vulnerable in that, near the beginning of the Constitutional Convention, he had extolled monarchy. In the newspaper conflict of 1792 his opponents dwelt relentlessly on the monarchical tone of his Convention speech.

His reply to them was that though he had speculatively considered the republican theory not practicable, yet "since the experiment of it began in the United States" he had "*wished* it success" and striven for its preservation. "It has been pertinently remarked," he said, "that *Cæsar*, who *overturned* the republic, was the Whig, Cato, who *died* for it, the Tory, of Rome."

About a month after Hamilton began publishing his articles in accusation of Jefferson, the President wrote both officers urging peace between them. In each of the two letters he earnestly suggested "mutual forbearances and temporizing yieldings" in the interest of harmony.

In answer to this appeal Jefferson, after deploring his having given to the passage of assumption a fur-

therance which he had been "duped into by the Secretary of the Treasury," presented a lengthy vindication of himself against all charges, expressed again a previous announcement of intending to retire from office the next March, and, indicating that he might then, at Monticello, deem it wise to come forward in print, said: "I will not suffer my retirement to be clouded by the slanders of a man whose history, from the moment at which history can stoop to notice him, is a tissue of machinations against the liberty of the country which has not only received and given him bread, but heaped its honors on his head."

Hamilton's reply to Washington's appeal for peace was brief and pointed. He could not, he said, recede at once from his newspaper campaign, to which he had been moved by apprehension of "the undoing of the funding system." It was his opinion, however, that unless Jefferson and he could soon reach some working accord they should both resign from the Cabinet. "I pledge my honor to you, Sir," he declared, "that, if you shall hereafter form a plan to reunite the members of your administration upon some steady principle of coöperation, I will faithfully concur in executing it during my continuance in office."

The date for the voting of the presidential electors in the various States was the 5th of December, and Congress was to assemble about a month before that time. John Adams, spending the summer at his home in Massachusetts, had decided that he would not be present at the opening of Congress but would return

to the capital at some time after the election. Of this decision the imperious Hamilton thoroughly disapproved. "I learn with pain," he wrote the proud Vice-President, "that you may not probably be here till late in the session. . . . Permit me to say it best suits the firmness and elevation of your character to meet all events, whether auspicious or otherwise, on the ground where station and duty call you. One would not give the ill-disposed the triumph of supposing that an anticipation of want of success has kept you from your post."

It was a few days after the election that three prominent Republican leaders—Frederick Muhlenburg, Abraham Venable, and James Monroe—called on the Secretary of the Treasury at his office. Muhlenberg acted as spokesman. They had discovered, he said, a suspicious financial connection between Hamilton and a Mr. Reynolds.

The lordly Secretary, upon hearing this announcement, addressed to his visitors, as might have been expected, expressions that were intense and sharp with indignation. His wrath was somewhat calmed, however, when they assured him that they had come not to impute a crime but to ask an explanation. They then presented before him several notes which he had written to Reynolds on pecuniary matters.

Hamilton, informing his questioners that he possessed documentary evidence in the light of which their uncertainty would be dispelled, asked them to come to his home that evening and there receive his explanation. They came according to invitation, and Oliver

Wolcott, at that time Comptroller of the Treasury, was, at Hamilton's instance, present as a witness.

Jacob Clingman, who with James Reynolds was under prosecution for suborning a person to commit perjury, had told Muhlenburg, his employer, that Reynolds knew Hamilton to be a guilty speculator, and Muhlenburg had enlisted the coöperation of Venable and Monroe for investigating Clingman's politically interesting remark. From Reynolds and his wife, the inquiring three had procured further statements purporting to incriminate the Secretary of the Treasury; and from Clingman, they had obtained notes which Hamilton had written Reynolds about money.

Hamilton prudently had kept Mrs. Reynolds's letters and also the various communications he had received from her husband; and all these documents, on the evening of December 15, 1792, at his home, he read to his investigating guests. Though Monroe was more reserved in doing so than the others, the Secretary's three political foes explicitly acknowledged that manifestly he was free from any official irregularity in connection with the Reynolds affair. It went without saying, of course, that the honor expected of gentlemen required future secrecy concerning the private incident which, under circumstances of peculiar necessity, had been disclosed.

Three days after this experience of costly exoneration, Hamilton, expressing regret over neglecting his friends, wrote to Jay: " 'T is the malicious intrigues to stab me in the dark . . . that distract and harass me to a point which, rendering my situation scarcely toler-



able, interferes with objects to which friendship and inclination would prompt me." In the same letter, as he discussed the results of the election, he complacently declared: "The success of the Vice-President is as great a source of satisfaction as that of Mr. Clinton would have been of mortification and pain to me."

## VII

Before the first session of the Second Congress had proceeded far in the transaction of its business, evidence was not lacking that Hamilton's most unrestrained enemy in the House of Representatives was William Branch Giles. The Secretary of the Treasury knew, he said, that Madison, deep in partnership with Jefferson, "was the prompter of Mr. Giles and others who were the open instruments of the opposition."

Giles was described by a contemporary as "a very able debater, and thoroughly versed in the tactics of deliberative assemblies." Soon after he came to Philadelphia as a new member of the House, in reference to him Senator Maclay wrote in his journal: "I saw a speech of his in the papers, which read very well, and they say he delivers himself handsomely." At a dinner with him Maclay found "that the frothy manners of Virginia were ever uppermost. Canvas-back ducks, ham and chickens, old Madeira, the glories of the Ancient Dominion, all fine, were his constant themes."

Shortly after the Second Congress convened—Giles being present from the very first day, October 24, 1791—its immediate business was the question of what

should be, according to the Constitution and the recent census, the numerical composition of the House.

Concerning this question the Senate and the House did not agree. The maximum but not the minimum proportional representation having been fixed by the Constitution, there was legal scope for the disagreement between the two bodies. What should be the ratio of representation for each State? The House proposed a ratio of one to thirty thousand; the Senate, one to thirty-three thousand. Hamilton, aristocratically opposed to the policy of having a numerous House, endorsed the proposal of the Senate.

The branches of Congress failing to concur, a third plan was devised. This plan contemplated representation on the basis of the aggregate population of all the States. It received the vote of both Houses; but the President, having taken counsel of his Cabinet and of Madison, gave it a veto. The veto was urged and written by Jefferson, Randolph, and Madison. Washington's agency regarding it was hardly more than transmissive, his main wish being to afford an unforgettable instance of yielding to the Republicans. Madison, however, was very soon complaining, as he and his Republican friends had complained before, of Hamilton's "mentorship to Washington."

Hamilton, true to his nationalistic principles, had argued, in differing from the President's Virginia advisers, that the apportionment bill was constitutional. Its defeat by veto was not, however, a serious reverse to him; for in lieu of the rejected measure the

Senate's former proposal, favoring a thirty-three thousand ratio, was adopted, and that plan was Hamilton's original, decided preference.

Giles, speaking against the bill in the final debate on the thirty-three thousand ratio, irrelevantly but vigorously attacked the policies of the Secretary of the Treasury and condemned "the doctrine that one systematic financier was better able to originate money bills and tax the people of the United States, than the whole collected wisdom of their Representatives."

In accordance with principles advocated in Hamilton's Report on Manufactures, which after the months of his laborious preparation he presented to the House on December 5, this session of Congress passed "an act for the encouragement of the Bank and other Cod Fisheries, and for the regulation and government of the fishermen employed therein."

Jefferson, thinking it portentous of "an unlimited government," was against the measure. "Mr. Madison," wrote Hamilton, "resisted it on the ground of constitutionality, till it was evident, by the intermediate questions taken, that the bill would pass; and he then, under the wretched subterfuge of a change of a single word, 'bounty' for 'allowance,' went over to the majority, and voted for the bill."

Giles delivered in the House a long speech in defense of this verbal change championed by Madison, and in the minds of none was there any uncertainty about whom he was intending to describe when, in concluding his speech, he made upbraiding reference

to "the most formidable and effectual *ministerial machine* which had been yet used in the administration of Government."

The masterful Secretary, in writing, May 26, 1792, of his triumphs in having brought measures to adoption, mentioned first "the affair of the bank," and then, coming in his narrative to events of the session in which Giles became his greatest oratorical foe, traced further the "current of success on the one side and of defeat on the other" that had, he was sure, infuriated the opposition.

"I prevailed," he said regarding the issue of the bank. "On the mint business," he declared, "I was opposed from the same quarters and with still less success. In the affair of ways and means for the Western expedition, on the supplementary arrangements concerning the debt, except as to additional assumption, my views have been equally prevalent in opposition to theirs."

With respect to the mint—the Republicans defeated at least one proposal evidently favored by Hamilton: that coins should bear a "representation of the head of the President of the United States for the time being." Opposing this plan, Giles in debate said: "It has a near affinity to titles, that darling child of the Senate, which has been put to nurse, with an intention that it shall be announced at some future period in due form."

Concerning the Western military expedition—Madison and his followers were desperately hostile to motions that the House turn to the Secretary of the Treasury for financial directions respecting the campaign. "He well knew," remarked Hamilton, "that if

he had prevailed a certain consequence was my resignation; that I would not be fool enough to make pecuniary sacrifices and endure a life of extreme drudgery without opportunity either to do material good or to acquire reputation. . . . My overthrow was anticipated as certain, and Mr. Madison, laying aside his wonted caution, boldly led his troops, as he imagined, to a certain victory. He was disappointed. Though late, I became apprised of the danger."

As to further policies regarding the funding system—Hamilton's report to the House, transmitted on February 7, 1792, contained a recommendation which was defeated, even as he bore witness. It was the recommendation of a supplementary assumption involving "an addition of 3,903,362 $\frac{7}{100}$  dollars to the sum of 21,500,000 dollars already assumed." The eloquence of Giles was the militant, resounding summons that animated Hamilton's foes to thwart this supplementary assumption proposal.

When the Second Congress had convened for its second session, November 5, 1792, Washington in his address said to the House: "I entertain a strong hope that the state of our national finances is now sufficiently matured to enable you to enter upon a systematic and effectual arrangement for the regular redemption . . . of the Public Debt. . . . Provision is likewise requisite for the reimbursement of the loan which has been made of the Bank of the United States."

Fitzsimons, a ready friend of Hamilton's, at once moved that these two matters of the President's address

be referred to the Secretary of the Treasury with instructions that he report ways and means of accomplishing them. Again Madison and his cohort fought against making a reference of financial problems to Hamilton, and again they lost the battle. On December 3 the triumphant Secretary transmitted his report concerning redemption of the debt and payment of the bank.

It was while action on this report was in course, that leaders of the opposition—notably Jefferson, Madison, and Giles—resorted to the stratagem of impugning the Secretary's official conduct.

Their intended movement must have seemed to them an adroit manoeuvre.

Might they not by means of it so engross Hamilton's attention as to impede, until adjournment, his generalship over the deliberations of Congress? Would not this result be a distinct advantage for them, since the next session was to be more Republican in composition? Could they not ask for more information concerning Hamilton's official transactions than he would find it possible to give before the imminent adjournment, and thus leave him throughout the summer discredited by unanswered suspicion? Was it probable, moreover, that any public servant could have created, within less than four years, a complex financial structure for an extensive nation, without having left in the records some evidence of policies or ventures susceptible of adverse interpretation?

Giles was selected, of course, to be the voice of the hostile advance against the formidable Secretary.

The doughty Virginian's first resolutions for information from the Treasury Department, moved by him immediately after Christmas, were so mild in signification that they passed the House without arousing suspicion of the deeply inimical purpose that was back of them. Hamilton promptly submitted the information for which according to his view these requisitions called.

The intention of his foes being what it was, however, his report could not have put an end to the investigation. Accordingly, on January 23, 1793, Giles moved a series of five further resolutions for information from the Secretary, and in presenting his motion hotly declaimed animadversions that pictured Hamilton as presumably a grand thief.

The Secretary's friends, confident of their chief's integrity, made no resistance to the resolutions of the persistent Giles for having a complete exposure. "The House of Representatives adopted the resolutions," wrote Hamilton with unmistakable pride, "*nemine contradicente*."

From the 4th to the 20th of February, the Secretary inundated Congress with comprehensive, meticulous reports of his transactions in office, he and the whole Treasury Department becoming almost incredibly productive of the precise statistics and information that had been required by the resolutions of Congress. Never before had Hamilton given more brilliant proof of the fame that reported him as possessing an unrivalled capacity for excellent intellectual achievement through quick indefatigable work.

"He was capable," one who knew him wrote, "of intense and effectual application . . . he had a rapidity and clearness of perception, in which he may not have been equalled." Acquainted with his habits of working, another said that when Hamilton "had a serious object to accomplish, his practice was to reflect on it previously; and when he had gone through this labor, he retired to sleep, without regard to the hour of the night, and having slept six or seven hours, he rose, and having taken strong coffee, seated himself at his table, where he would remain six, seven, or eight hours; and the product of his rapid pen, required little correction for the press." Rufus King, a competent judge, spoke of the mind of the Secretary as "the most capacious and discriminating" he had ever known.

Hamilton's exhaustive reports having been submitted, the action of the House clearly proclaimed that the documents, hailed everywhere as an amazing intellectual accomplishment, contained a true exoneration.

Though on the basis of the Secretary's reports Giles moved nine resolutions of censure, yet, at least by comparison with his former charges, these new proposals of his against Hamilton expressed only very gentle blame. The Secretary's friends could not refrain from celebrating, in the debate on the new resolutions, this difference in the tone of Giles's accusations.

"Mr. Chairman," said Robert Barnwell of South Carolina, "I am extremely happy that, in passing through the medium of that gentleman's examination, this subject has changed its hue from the foul stain of



peculation to the milder coloring of an illegal exercise of discretion, and a want of politeness in the Secretary of the Treasury."

William Smith, also of South Carolina, expressed himself as indeed gratified that what "was announced as abominable corruption, was dwindled away into a mere drawing of money from Europe into this country, to be applied here according to law."

John Laurance of Hamilton's own State, referring to Giles's former, criminating speech against the Secretary, said: "This charge is now dropped, and it is honorable to the officer concerned that, after much probing, nothing is found to support it."

After two days of debating them, the House, on the evening of March 1, voted seriatim on Giles's resolutions that purported to censure Hamilton. The results of the voting were victorious for the Secretary: each resolution of blame was in turn overwhelmingly rejected. On the final division the vindication was recorded by a vote of thirty-four to seven.

Though the voting occurred in an assembly about equally divided as to political friends and foes of the Federalist leader, yet the largest number supporting any of the accusing resolutions was fifteen. The consistent seven who, that impassioned evening, together accepted the last blow in the utter and ignominious defeat of Hamilton's enemies were—John Baptist Ashe, Abraham Baldwin, William B. Grove, Richard B. Lee, Nathaniel Macon, James Madison, and William B. Giles.

## VIII

Several motives were back of Hamilton's decision, first expressed in the summer of 1793, to resign his position in the Cabinet.

At least two of these motives had relation to politics. Resentfully the ambitious Secretary realized that the next Congress, whose House of Representatives was to be Republican, probably would take from him the initiative he had so freely exercised in directing national finance. Furthermore, to the President he had intimated a willingness jointly to resign from the Cabinet with his arch antagonist; and Jefferson, in his every interview with Washington, was speaking of his deferred but intended retirement to Monticello.

With sincerity, however, Hamilton could write to Angelica Church of his earnest desire to have "domestic happiness the more freely" as being "a principal motive" for relinquishing office. "I tell you without regret," he also said to her, "*that I am poorer than when I went into official life.*"

Angelica thought that Betsey was responsible for the resignation. "I am inclined to believe," she wrote her sister, "that it is your influence induces him to withdraw from public life. That so good a wife, so tender a mother, should be so bad a patriot is wonderful."

When Schuyler heard that a New York politician, Fairlie, was saying that Hamilton's intention to leave the Cabinet arose from a desire to become governor and so escape the consequences of a hopeless confusion in Treasury affairs, he pointedly declared in the man's

presence "that the propagator of such a calumny was a liar and a villain."

At the time Hamilton informed Washington, June 21, 1793, of his intending to resign, Edmond Charles Genêt, minister plenipotentiary from the Republic of France to the United States, was jubilantly making, as the historian Riethmüller has said, "the reputation of perhaps the *most impudent diplomatist* that was ever employed by one nation to force its designs upon another."

Many and audacious were the offenses Genêt was committing against the Government of the country that had received him as envoy. He was sending out privateers, caused by him to be equipped and manned within the nation to which he had come as minister, to cruise against ships of European powers that were at war with France but at peace with the United States. At his order, French consuls had become courts of admiralty for trying and condemning prizes—regardless of what exceptionable conditions might have attended their capture—brought by his cruisers into American ports.

Genêt thought there was freedom for this conduct in two treaties existing between the United States and France: the Treaty of Commerce, by which French privateers and prizes might have shelter in American ports, and the Treaty of Alliance, by which the United States guaranteed the French possessions in America.

Washington, whose policy was scrupulously consistent with his purpose of maintaining peace until

Congress should regularly meet and share with him responsibility in the crisis, had issued, upon learning of fresh hostilities in Europe, a Proclamation of Neutrality, and was seeking by Cabinet action to curb the wild career of Genêt.

The American populace, however, sympathetic with the foreign Republic even after the terrors of August and September, 1792, and the subsequent execution of the King, hailed and abetted, with many leaders encouraging their ardor, the arrogant minister from France. Washington was generally and publicly assailed with charges of having exceeded his authority by issuing the Proclamation. The neutrality he was requiring of American citizens was, many speakers and writers passionately declared, contrary to the existing treaties with France.

Hamilton—who abhorred the revolutionary movement in its gory phase, and who by refusing anticipations of the installments on the French debt decidedly hindered Genêt—as “*Pacificus*” refuted in print the criticism with which the country was resounding against Washington. Presenting logic that was first eliminative and then conclusive, “*Pacificus*” argued that the right to make a declaration of neutrality “can belong neither to the legislative nor judicial department, and therefore of course must belong to the executive.”

The charge of inconsistency between the Proclamation and the treaties, “*Pacificus*” answered by reminding his readers that the guarantee on the part of the United States to France, the only agreement rescinded

by neutrality, belonged to an alliance explicitly "of the defensive kind," and of there being no ground for doubt "that France first declared and began the war against Austria, Prussia, Savoy, Holland, England, and Spain."

Jefferson—who believed in the Revolution and who thought that because of constitutional limits on presidential authority Washington's Proclamation should not be regarded as affecting the guarantee to France—summoned Madison to contest the doctrines of "Pacificus."

Responding to this call, Madison of *The Federalist*, Hamilton's quondam friend, who in advance of its acceptance had collaborated with him in immortally elucidating the Constitution, writing as "Helvidius" ably joined issue with him concerning its application to actual events.

Refugees who had come from St. Domingo and France because of revolutionary conditions, received from the Hamiltons, who were ever generous beyond their means, financial aid, and in several instances, friendship. "I wish I was a Croesus," Hamilton said. "I might then afford solid consolation to these children of adversity."

Illustrious personages were among those who had fled France for the American capital. Angelica Church sent letters to the Hamiltons introducing a number of her European friends who were *émigrés*. She thus presented Talleyrand, Liancourt, and Beaumetz.

Subsequently she informed her sister: "Tallyrand

and Beaumetz write in raptures to all their friends of your kindness, and Colonel Hamilton's abilities and manners, and I receive innumerable compliments on his and your account."

Later, in his voluminous work on the United States, Liancourt said: "Mr. Hamilton is one of the first men of America, at least of those whom I have yet seen. He has breadth of mind, and even genius, clearness in his ideas, facility in their expression, information on all points, cheerfulness, excellence of character, and much amiability. I believe that even this eulogy is not adequate to his merit."

Talleyrand, after having had several years of intimate acquaintance with Hamilton, declared: "I consider Napoleon, Fox, and Hamilton as the three greatest men of our epoch, and if I must decide between the three, I should give without hesitating the first place to Hamilton. He had divined Europe."

While in the midst of engrossing and eminent official responsibility the Secretary of the Treasury was still hoping that his father, James Hamilton, would come to the United States to live with him. He had written, in August, 1792, to William Seton, cashier of the Bank of New York, saying: "Inclosed, my dear sir, is a letter to Mr. Donald, of St. Vincents, which I beg your most particular care in forwarding. . . . The letter to Mr. Donald covers one to my father, who, from a series of misfortunes, was reduced to great distress. You will perceive from this that I must be anxious for the safe conveyance of my letter." The next summer a letter subscribed "your very affectionate father," reached the

filial son. "The war," wrote James Hamilton, "which has lately broken out between France and England makes it very dangerous going to sea at this time. However, we daily expect news of peace, and when that takes place, provided it is not too late in the season, I will embark in the first vessel that sails for Philadelphia."

It was in July, 1793, when the famous unavailing effort was being made by the Government to detain the British vessel *Little Sarah*, which had been taken as a French prize and which Genêt was equipping in the capital to be the privateer *Petit Démocrate*, that the defiant French minister, determined to send this latest addition to his fleet out to sea, declared boldly that he would "appeal from the President to the people."

A fulfillment of this threat Hamilton thought he saw in "various publications" in the papers, one of them signed by "Juba" and another by "A Jacobin." The argument of these letters to the press was that Washington, in his efforts to keep Genêt's marine activities under control, had specifically violated the Treaty of Commerce between the United States and France.

To refute this argument the scholarly, combative Secretary of the Treasury, citing works on the law of nations by Vattel, Leoline Jenkins, Bynkershoek, and Valin, wrote and published his "No Jacobin" papers. Discussing the main point in question concerning the Treaty with France he said: "This stipulation . . .

can by no rule of construction be turned into an agreement to permit the privateers of one party, when engaged in war with a third power with whom the other party is at peace, to fit or arm in the ports of the party at peace."

Hamilton's writing of the "No Jacobin" papers, August, 1793, was interrupted by his being early stricken with yellow fever in the Philadelphia epidemic that lasted through a ghastly autumn. Oliver Wolcott reported: "Col. Hamilton lives about two miles out of the city, and by entering the house of a sick person caught the fever. He was violently attacked."

Mrs. Washington, anxious concerning the sick man, sent Betsey a parcel with a note. "We are lucky to have," she said, "these bottles of the old wine that was carried to the East Indies which is sent with three of another kind which is very good, and we have a plenty to supply you as often as you please to send for it of the latter."

When he was recovering from his illness Hamilton wrote the physicians of Philadelphia: "I trust I now am completely out of danger. This I attribute, under God, to the skill and care of my friend Dr. Stevens, a gentleman from the Island of St. Croix, and to whose talents I can attest from an acquaintance begun in early youth." During the prevalence of the fever, the Hamilton children, then five in number, remained with the Schuylers in Albany. In a letter to Angelica, Hamilton said: "I was very glad to learn, my dear



daughter, that you were going to begin the study of the French language."

The ensuing winter, soon after Congress had assembled, the Speaker of the House received from the Secretary of the Treasury a communication in which that cabinet officer, having adverted to rumors that in the previous session the inquiry into the Treasury affairs had not been complete, declared: "Unwilling to leave the matter on such a footing, I have concluded to request of the House of Representatives, as I now do, that a new inquiry may without delay be instituted in some mode, the most effectual for an accurate and thorough investigation; and I will add, that the more comprehensive it is, the more agreeable it will be to me."

Two committees of investigation were appointed, both composed largely of men unfriendly to Hamilton. One of these committees inquired into criminating charges brought against the Secretary by A. G. Fraunces, who had been dismissed from the Treasury Department; the other made an exhaustive examination with regard to all intimations and suspicions concerning the fiscal affairs of the Government. Both inquiries, though managed by his political foes, resulted in complete and unanimous exculpation of the Secretary. It was John Marshall who said that the investigation was "the more honorable" to Hamilton "because it was conducted by those who were not his friends."

During that session of Congress, Madison presented his celebrated "Resolutions" proposing commercial discrimination favorable to France and unfavorable to Britain. Against these resolutions Hamilton's "Americanus" papers appeared in the *Gazette of the United States*.

The most important speech the House of Representatives heard in opposition to Madison's provocative motion, during weeks of oratory, was written by Hamilton and delivered by his friend William Smith of South Carolina. Smith, whom he could always trust, was, according to the Secretary, "a ready, clear speaker."

The debate on the resolutions was superseded finally by consideration of measures of defense, after publication appeared of Lord Dorchester's statement to certain Indians that the United States and Great Britain would soon be at war. That hostilities might be averted if possible, Washington decided on the expedient of sending a special minister to London. He wished that Hamilton might have the mission; but an intimation of this preference caused a pandemonium of remonstrance from Republican leaders.

Hamilton, though he was hoping soon to have opportunity to go to Europe, and though the avoidance of war with England was an object to which he was patriotically dedicated, understanding Washington's embarrassment wrote him in magnanimous spirit, concerning the proposed mission, "I am not unapprised of what has been the bias of your opinion on the subject. I am well aware of all the collateral obstacles

which exist; and I assure you in the utmost sincerity that I shall be completely and entirely satisfied with the election of another." He then convincingly urged the nomination of Jay.

It was a sharp disappointment to Angelica Church that her brother-in-law—in her words "Alexander the good and the amiable"—was not named for the mission. "Ah *petit Fripon*," she had written upon learning that he might be chosen, "you and Betsey in England. I have no ideas for such happiness, but when will you come and receive the tears of joy and affection?"

Soon after Jay arrived in London he received a letter in which Hamilton informed him: "The session of Congress is about to close better than I expected. All mischievous measures have been prevented, and several good ones have been established." With spirited pleasure mention was made of the passage of a bill "for punishing and preventing practices contrary to neutrality" and providing "adequate means for repressing the fitting out of privateers, the taking of commissions, or enlisting in foreign service."

Jay must have remembered that Hamilton, chief agent in the defeat and recall of Genêt, had been aggressively active in championing that bill. The Secretary had been successfully busy, also, in getting a ways and means committee, which the House had named to take upon itself his accustomed function of originating fiscal measures, to adopt and recommend several of his proposals for further revenue, which, under his influential guidance, passed Congress and became law.

In December, 1794, Hamilton wrote Angelica Church: "My dear Eliza has been lately very ill. Thank God, she is now quite recovered, except that she continues somewhat weak. My absence on a certain expedition was the cause."

He had been away with the troops in the armed march that subdued the Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania. He had felt that since it was his contested excise measure that was occasioning the stubborn defiance of law, the responsibility of suppressing the insurrection was peculiarly his. Therefore he had ridden forth with Washington in accompanying the army, remaining with them after Washington had returned to Philadelphia.

Hamilton was violently criticized for urging the assertion of force and for going on the expedition. "I have learned," he commented, "to hold popular opinion of no value. I hope to derive from the esteem of the discerning, and an internal consciousness of zealous endeavors for the public good, the reward of those endeavors."

Two months in advance of January 31, 1795, which was the day his resignation became effective, Hamilton, always both sensitive and confident about his integrity, announced to the Speaker the date of his intended retirement and requested that the House institute any further proceedings they might have in contemplation with regard to investigating his Department. But there were no more inquiries into his official conduct: even

the inordinately suspicious among his congressional foes had been convinced that his honesty was scrupulous and absolute.

The Secretary, in two of the most notable of the many distinguished reports he transmitted to Congress, reviewed for the Senate, on the eve of leaving office, all fiscal Acts of the five years of his coöperation with them, and recommended to the House wise plans for future improvement of the revenue.

Washington, looking forward to February 19, 1795, as a day of Thanksgiving for the existing national prosperity and peace, naturally turned to Hamilton as the appropriate person to draft the Proclamation. "In such a state of things," referring to the general blessings Hamilton wrote, "it is in an especial manner our duty as a people, with devout reverence and affectionate gratitude, to acknowledge our many and great obligations to Almighty God."

Two days after his indispensable assistant gave up his office, Washington said to him in a note: "In every relation which you have borne to me I have found that my confidence in your talents, exertions, and integrity, has been well placed."

Though he was just thirty-eight, Hamilton received from McHenry this advice and praise: "I may now congratulate you on having established a system of credit, and having conducted the affairs of our country upon principles and reasoning which ought to insure its immortality, as it undoubtedly will your fame. . . . Let this console you for past toils and pains, and

reconcile you to humbler pleasures and a private life."

But Angelica Church, who knew him better than McHenry did, had recently asked him: "Can a mind engaged by Glory taste of peace and ease?"

CHAPTER SEVEN

WEEHAWKEN AT SEVEN

“It is not my design, by what I have said, to affix any odium on the conduct of Col. Burr in this case. . . . It is also my ardent wish that I may have been more mistaken than I think I have been; and that he, by his future conduct, may show himself worthy of all confidence and esteem and prove an ornament and a blessing to the country.”





## I

HAMILTON'S mood after resigning was heavy with discouragement.

His dejection was in consequence of what seemed to him stupidity on the part of Congress in action they were taking on financial measures. "The unnecessary and capricious and abominable assassination of the national honor . . . in the House of Representatives haunts me every step I take, and afflicts me more than I can express," he wrote to Rufus King. "Am I," he continued, "more of an American than those who drew their first breath on American ground? Or what is it that thus torments me at a circumstance so calmly viewed by almost everybody else? Am I a fool—a romantic Quixote—or is there a constitutional defect in the American mind?" Were it not for King and a few others, he declared, he "could adopt the reveries of De Paux" and "say with him that there is some thing in our climate which belittles every animal, human or brute."

But this despondency operated in Hamilton's somewhat volatile temperament to stimulate his powers of mind and speech.

Three days after his lament to King he assisted the Attorney-General of the United States in gaining legal sanction for an Act which as Secretary he had proposed; and the report of his appearance in the case, given in a

Philadelphia paper of February 25, was: "Yesterday, in the Supreme Court of the United States, Mr. Hamilton, late Secretary of the Treasury, made a most eloquent speech in support of the constitutionality of the carriage tax. He spoke for three hours, and the whole of his argument was clear, impressive, and classical. The audience, which was very numerous, and among whom were many foreigners of distinction and many of the Members of Congress, testified the effect produced by the talents of this great orator and statesman."

After leaving Philadelphia the Hamilton family went to the home of the Schuylers in Albany. "We remain here," Hamilton from that place wrote Angelica Church, "till June, when we become stationary at New York, where I resume the practice of law."

The Chamber of Commerce of New York, in anticipation of his returning to be a citizen in their midst, honored him with a banquet at their hall in the Tontine Coffee House. A contemporary paper reported that "great decorum as well as conviviality marked the entertainment, and the company expressed peculiar satisfaction in this opportunity of demonstrating their respect for a man who by discharging the duties of an important office, has deserved well of his country." Hamilton proposed among the volunteer toasts: "The merchants of New York, may they never cease to have Honour for their Commander, Skill for their Pilot, and Success for their Port"; and the Chancellor of the State responded with the sentiment: "May Love and Honour be the Reward of Virtue." There were nine

cheers—"after Mr. Hamilton had withdrawn"—for Alexander Hamilton.

Throughout the crisis, 1795-96, of popular revolution against Jay's Treaty, Hamilton stood with Washington and fought on his side. With the President's resolution that in reference to the warring European powers the United States should maintain independence and peace, he was eloquently in accord.

Jefferson heartily fomented the prevailing clamorous sympathy with France that resisted Washington's international policy. Writing afterward, in 1818, about the outcome of Jay's mission, and the last days of the master of Mount Vernon, he said: "Understanding . . . that I disapproved of that Treaty . . . he had become alienated from myself personally, as from the republican body generally of his fellow citizens."

Hamilton militantly supported the Senate and the President in their acceptance of the Treaty; agreed in the reasoning of Washington's refusal on constitutional grounds to present to the House the papers relating to Jay's negotiations; and rejoiced in the victory when the House was at last forced by a changing public sentiment, and persuaded by the eloquence of Fisher Ames, into taking measures for new and more amicable relations between the United States and Great Britain.

Soon after the Treaty had been received, and before the Senate had convened to act on it, Hamilton wrote and published an argument in its favor, signed "Horatius." It was just after the Treaty had been ratified by the Senate that he was hit on the brow by a

stone thrown from a New York throng he was attempting to address on the exciting issue, and answering, "If you use such striking arguments I must retire," proceeded at once to the writing of the renowned exposition and appeal of the "Camillus" papers. Rufus King helped him complete the task, but before receiving any collaboration Hamilton had written twenty-five of the thirty-eight celebrated documents. "He was among the few," said a contemporary, "alike excellent whether in speaking or in writing."

Jefferson, alarmed over the evident effect of "Camillus's" defense of the Treaty, again appealed to Madison. "For God's sake take up your pen," he urged. "Hamilton," he said, "is really a Colossus to the anti-republican party; without numbers he is a host within himself. . . . In truth when he comes forward there is nobody but yourself who can meet him."

But Madison, whatever his reasons were for refusing, was content to let his pen rest from controversy. The New York lawyer, however, as "Camillus" and as "Philo-Camillus" tirelessly continued his argumentative essays, and soon James Callender, the most virulent of his enemies, made the acknowledgment: "As a political writer, Alexander Hamilton holds the same rank in America that Burke enjoys in England."

Washington in 1796 turned to Hamilton for assistance in preparing his important "Farewell Address."

It was usual with the first President, when he had a speech to write, to give his ideas or those of the Cabinet

to one of his associates, for composition into suitable literary form. In 1792, thinking that he would then announce his retirement, he had thus enlisted the aid of Madison in preparing an adieu from the President to the country. It was this paper that, with certain more recent additions of his own, Washington four years later sent to Hamilton, having requested that he "redress" it. Hamilton complied with this request, but before doing so he wrote for the President a new address.

To the composition of the new address Hamilton brought his utmost care and skill. As he framed its sentences he read them to his wife, saying, "My dear Eliza, you must be to me what Molière's old nurse was to him." In sending it to Washington he declared: "It has been my object to render this act importantly and lastingly useful, and, avoiding all cause of present exception, to embrace such reflections and sentiments as will wear well, progress in approbation with time, and redound to future reputation. How far I have succeeded, you will judge." Washington, with the three papers before him,—Madison's and his, Madison's and his altered, and Hamilton's,—chose the composition of his gifted New York friend. "I have given the paper herein enclosed several serious and attentive readings, and prefer it greatly to the other drafts," he wrote Hamilton in sending him the address for his final revision.

Shortly afterwards, as Hamilton and Betsey were walking together on Broadway and he bought from an

old soldier a printed copy of the Farewell Address, he remarked to her: "That man does not know he has asked me to purchase my own work."

In prestige Hamilton apparently lost nothing by his retirement from office: his attractiveness and talents were still a focus of discriminating admiration. "He was expected, one day in December, 1795, at dinner," wrote Sullivan of Massachusetts from memory of the occasion, "and was the last who came. When he entered the room, it was apparent from the respectful attention of the company that he was a distinguished individual. He was dressed in a blue coat, with bright buttons; the skirts of his coat were unusually long. He wore a white waistcoat, black silk small clothes, white silk stockings. The gentleman who received him as a guest, introduced him to such of the company as were strangers to him; to each he made a formal bow, bending very low, the ceremony of shaking hands not being observed. . . . At dinner, whenever he engaged in the conversation, every one listened attentively."

That evening, according to the Massachusetts writer, "he was in a mixed assembly of both sexes; and the tranquil reserve, noticed at the dinner table, had given place to a social and playful manner, as though in this he was alone ambitious to excel."

During the year 1796, Hamilton twice appeared in print against the hostility of the Republic of France to the Jay Treaty.

"If we are wise," he said in the first paper, "we shall

endeavor to estimate rightly the probable motives of whatever displeasure France or her agents may have shown to this measure." When communications were later published by the French minister, Adet, announcing a sharp decree from his Government against neutral countries, Hamilton wrote, as "*Americanus*" again, *The Answer*. He believed, he said, that the timing of Adet's communications was "intended to influence the election of president by the apprehension of war with France."

In the main, Hamilton was disappointed at the results of that epochal election.

Jefferson, taking counsel of his fears, had proposed to Madison that they "come to a good understanding" with Adams, who, he said, was "the only sure barrier against Hamilton's getting in." But his fears were groundless; for the Federalists knew and had known that the imperious man who led their party was too much a political dictator to be an eligible candidate for the Presidency.

Hamilton at first had suggested, as suitable to be Washington's successor, Patrick Henry of Virginia, who had turned Federalist. Henry declining the suggestion, the Federalist leader's second and more enthusiastic choice was Thomas Pinckney of South Carolina. Toward the end of having Pinckney elected President, Adams Vice-President, and Jefferson roundly defeated, he had sedulously worked.

When the election was declared, he wrote to King, who had gone to London as minister: "Mr. Adams is President, Mr. Jefferson is Vice-President. Our Jaco-

bins say they are well-pleased, and that the *lion* and the *lamb* are to lie down together. Mr. Adams' personal friends talk a little in the same way. . . . Skeptics like me quietly look forward to the event, willing to hope, but not prepared to believe."

## II

Of the need for him to concenter his interest on his professional business and so improve his financial condition, Hamilton was seriously aware; but his love of country, mixed with his desire for glory, continued to cause each succeeding emergency of a critical period in national development to engross him, leaving only varying remnants of time for his work as a lawyer. Talleyrand, just before he returned to France, after walking late one night past Hamilton's office in New York, said the next day: "I have seen one of the wonders of the world. I have seen a man laboring all night for the support of his family, who has made the fortune of a nation."

When C. C. Pinckney had been sent as minister to France, to supersede Monroe, who was thought by Washington and Hamilton and others to be too sympathetic with that country's resentment of the Jay Treaty, "Americanus" once more appeared in print.

Under that signature Hamilton, commencing in January, 1797, wrote and published six papers, *The Warning*, as an appeal to the citizenry of America to prefer their own country above the warring Republic across the sea. After describing the depredations of



France against American commerce, and the ominous success of French arms in the contemporary war, "Americanus" concluded: "The man who, after this mass of evidence, shall be the apologist of France, and the calumniator of his own government, is not an American. The choice for him lies between being deemed a fool, a madman, or a traitor."

Following a curt refusal abroad to receive Pinckney as minister, Hamilton, thinking the United States as yet too young to enter a war, was active and influential in bringing the Government to the determination of sending a commission of three who should further seek accommodation of the trouble with France.

Adams ardently favored that measure, but the Federalist leaders in general were against it. "Jere Smith," wrote George Cabot to Wolcott, "tells me that a difference of sentiment prevails in and *out* of the Cabinet respecting the expediency of a new embassy to France." That the embassy might be sent, Hamilton brought all his persuasiveness to bear upon many of his closest friends, particularly upon those in the Cabinet.

But though Hamilton was thus aiding the President's policy, Adams, remembering personal grievances, was so unwisely bold as to condemn the former Secretary of the Treasury and refuse to accept his co-operation. This choleric attitude, persistently maintained, deprived him of fealty from the men composing the Cabinet he had accepted from the previous administration; and transferred to a New York law office, for a period of about two years, the leadership to which as President he was entitled; and directly resulted,

according to his own admission, in his defeat at the next election. He found to his grief that Hamilton was "commander-in-chief of the House of Representatives, of the Senate, of the heads of Department, of General Washington, and last, and least, if you will, of the President of the United States."

Though in his preoccupation with public questions Hamilton was giving insufficient time to his own vocational interests, and though his conscience regarding fees was peculiarly modest, yet a considerable income was accruing to him from his practice of law. "The profits of my profession," he wrote his uncle the Laird of the Grange in Scotland, "authorize an expectation of such addition to my resources as will render the eve of my life easy and agreeable."

In that letter to his uncle, May 2, 1797, sent in response to a gratefully informing communication from his kinsman regarding family connections, Hamilton wrote an interesting, brief autobiography. In the course of it with evident pride he said: "It is a pleasant reflection to me, that since the commencement of my connection with General Washington to the present time, I have possessed a flattering share of his confidence and friendship." Describing his domestic satisfaction he informed his Scotch uncle, also Alexander Hamilton: "I married the second daughter of General Schuyler, a gentleman of one of the best families of this country. . . . It is impossible to be happier than I am in a wife." In concluding his letter he expressed the hospitable and loyal assurance: "It will give me the

greatest pleasure to receive your son Robert at my house in New York, and still more to be of use to him."

In the summer of 1797 the public mind was excited over a Republican pamphlet,—written by James Callender,—which purported to present evidence of dishonesty on the part of Hamilton while he was Secretary of the Treasury.

Callender had obtained documents relating to the Reynolds affair, and these he printed in his pamphlet. They were the notes—shown to Hamilton by his three political foes when they visited him in December 1792—that the trio of investigators had taken on conversations with the Reynoldses and Clingman; and also a memorandum made by Monroe of a further talk with Clingman after the night when the Secretary's inquisitorial guests had acknowledged themselves satisfied with the sufficiency of the proof he confessed.

How had these papers been made available to Callender?

Venable said, in response to Hamilton's immediate inquiry, that he had not kept any of them, originals or copies; Muhlenburg and Monroe, in a joint statement, declared that the precious sheets had been "deposited in the hands of a respectable character in Virginia," and that they were still there. Hamilton, having been previously informed by Muhlenburg that Monroe had "all the papers relating to the subject in his possession," pursued the discharged former minister to France with letters of indignant blame for having made possible the publication of disproved charges, and for having

taken and kept, after the accepted exculpation at the Secretary's home, notes on aspersions by Clingman, the mercenary instigator of perjury.

In one of these accusing letters from Hamilton, the berated Monroe was told that his motives were "malignant and dishonorable," and in another—the appearance being that he was disposed to extend a challenge—he was invited "to settle time and place."

But to Monroe it must have seemed that Hamilton was discredited forever by a published odium which he would not dare to explain. That, if it was his view of the case, was an ignorant reckoning; for there was nothing the former Secretary would not freely dare when his honesty was in question. Hamilton, with apologies mainly to his wife, wrote a frank statement of the whole truth of the Reynolds case,—including an account of Monroe's perfidy,—and published it, with the proving documents, to the world. It must have been impossible for the public to read the pamphlet without realizing that Monroe was the man whom its complete and scandalous truth most destructively condemned.

In confessing the evil of his conduct the straightforward Hamilton said: "I can never cease to condemn myself for the pang which it may inflict in a bosom eminently entitled to all my gratitude, fidelity, and love. But that bosom will approve, that, even at so great an expense, I should effectually wipe away a more serious stain from a name which it cherishes with no less elevation than tenderness." Mrs. Hamilton, however poignant her suffering, did not waver in her

loyalty to her husband; but from that time throughout her future years she intensely despised James Monroe.

Whatever may have been the effect of the Reynolds disclosure upon Hamilton's standing in the national community, Washington was quick to indicate that his friendship was unchanged. "Not for any intrinsic value the thing possesses," he wrote, "but as a token of my sincere regard and friendship for you, and as a remembrance of me, I pray you to accept a wine cooler for four bottles, which Colonel Biddle is directed to forward from Philadelphia." Expressing appreciation Hamilton answered: "The token of your regard . . . is very precious to me, and will always be remembered as it ought to be. Mrs. Hamilton has lately added another boy to our stock; she and the child are both well."

When intelligence had arrived of the contemptuous treatment accorded the American embassy by France through three intermediary agents,—designated, in the dispatches to Congress, X, Y, and Z,—Hamilton took his place in the forefront of the consequent firm procedure on the part of the United States.

As "Titus Manlius" he wrote *The Stand*—seven scintillating papers. He declined Governor Jay's offer to appoint him Senator, evidently wishing to hold himself in readiness for military service. A provisional army having been voted, and Washington having been made Commander-in-Chief, he eagerly accepted a commission, won for him by the Commander and the Cabinet against Adams's persevering remonstrance, to

be the general next to the former President in rank and command. Though he sought to keep tyranny out of the Alien and Sedition bills,—which were war measures,—when they became law he upheld them, proposing, in answer to the nullification doctrine of the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, to divide the large, strong States into smaller political units, and to march if necessary a subduing army into the Old Dominion. Desirous of obtaining for the United States, ahead of France, possession of the Floridas and Louisiana, then Spanish territory, he fostered and espoused even a further imperialistic dream: “If universal empire is still to be the pursuit of France, what can tend to defeat the purpose better than to detach South America from Spain, which is only the channel through which the riches of *Mexico and Peru* are conveyed to France?”

But in the midst of the preparations for war John Adams, looking to the Republicans for approval, defied Hamilton and the Federalist party, and dissipated the strong advantageous position of the United States by sending another embassy to France. “Had the foulest heart and the ablest head in the world,” wrote Theodore Sedgwick, “been permitted to select the most embarrassing and ruinous measure, perhaps it would have been precisely the one which has been adopted.” In what seems to have been the last letter Washington lived to receive from him, Hamilton said, concerning Adams’s determined plan to send the commissioners: “All my calculations lead me to regret the measure. I

hope that it may not in its consequences involve the United States in a war on the side of France with her enemies. My trust in Providence, which has so often interposed in our favor, is my only consolation."

It was on June 3, 1799, that James Hamilton of St. Vincent died. When Hamilton had heard that the advice of physicians had led his father to abandon the idea of going to live in New York, he had said: "The next thing for me is, in proportion to my means, to endeavor to increase his comforts where he is." There was never any stint in the provision which the dependable son faithfully made for his aged and unfortunate father.

Insisting that his former aide and beloved friend be the chief general under him, Washington had lately declared to Adams about Hamilton: "By some he is considered an ambitious man, and therefore a dangerous one. That he is ambitious I shall readily grant; but it is of the laudable kind which prompts a man to excel in whatever he takes in hand." Hamilton, ever aspiring and active for his Country's welfare, was away on military and political business when Lear's letter to him, announcing Washington's death, reached New York. Upon his return, in telling Lear of how the "painful event" had filled his "heart with bitterness," he wrote: "Perhaps no man in this community has equal cause with myself to deplore the loss. I have been much indebted to the kindness of the General, and he was an *Ægis* very essential to me. . . . If virtue can

secure happiness in another world, he is happy. In this the seal is now put upon *his* glory. It is no longer in jeopardy from the fickleness of fortune."

### III

In 1798, for the summer and fall of that year, Hamilton took a country house with the J. B. Churches, who had returned to New York from their long residence abroad. On this estate, his health having begun to show symptoms of impairment, he sought, with a fowling piece and dog of recent purchase, needed recreation.

He must have liked living away from the city, for he soon began to think of acquiring a country place of his own. While on a trip to Philadelphia he wrote Betsey: "I am always very happy . . . when I can steal a few moments to sit down and write to you. You are my good genius; of that kind which the ancient philosophers called a *familiar*. . . . I have formed a sweet project, of which I will make you my confidant when I come to New York, and in which I rely that you will coöperate with me cheerfully. •

You may guess and guess and guess again  
Your guessing will be still in vain."

In October of the next year, 1799, he said in a note to Gen. Ebenezer Stevens: "If the owner of the ground adjoining you will take eight hundred pounds (£800) for sixteen acres including a parcel of the woodland, and lying on the water the whole breadth, you will oblige me by concluding the bargain with *him*, and I



will pay the money as soon as a good title shall appear."

The land was bought, and on it Hamilton built a large house, the Grange. His superintending, with Betsey's help, the construction of the Grange, and his activities in succession to Washington as president of the Society of the Cincinnati, were salutary diversions for him in the most trying and sorrowful period of his life.

His experience of disappointment and loss did not come in connection with his practice of law. In his work as attorney and counsellor he was increasingly successful. His professional agenda was replete with names that were the most important in New York.

In the greatest commercial case of that time, *Le Guen vs. Gouverneur* and Kemble, he and Burr acted together and were victorious for the plaintiff. It was in this litigation, at an Albany term of court, that Gouverneur Morris, who represented the defendants, received a taunting thrust that afterwards seemed to rankle in his memory. In the course of his argument he gestured toward Hamilton and said: "Before I have done I am confident I shall make my learned friend cry out, 'Help me, Cassius,' (pointing to Burr) 'or I sink.'" To this ringing threat, which brought from Hamilton some ironical response, Schuyler thus referred in a letter to Betsey: "Mr. Morris of Counsel for Mr. Gouverneur showed much indiscretion by observations injurious to my Dear General, but such a reply was given as afforded General pleasure to the Court and Audience, and which Mr. Morris felt sc

sensibly that I hope he will profit by It, for I very sincerely wish him well."

About two months after his appearance with Burr in the trial of the Le Guen case, Hamilton's grief began.

In May, 1800, by bringing forward as Republican candidates for the Assembly such men as Horatio Gates, Brockholst Livingston, and George Clinton, each of whom had a numerous personal following, Burr defeated the Federalists in a contest that would determine the political complexion of the next presidential electors.

Hamilton and other Federalists, dreading Jefferson, then urged Governor Jay to call the Legislature and have them take "a *legal* and *constitutional* step to prevent an atheist in religion, and a fanatic in politics, from getting possession of the helm of state." In the letter containing this appeal to Jay, written by Hamilton, a plan was suggested: "The calling of the Legislature will have for its object the *choosing of electors by the people in districts*."

But Jay, connected by marriage with a Republican clan, the Livingstons, repudiated the proposal of his Federalist friends as "a measure for party purposes." However, in that intense campaign of 1800, Virginia and Massachusetts changed, "for party purposes," the mode of choosing electors, as Hamilton wished to do in New York.

The thought of Jefferson in the Presidency was hardly more obnoxious to Hamilton than the prospect

of Adams again in that position. In June, 1800, Hamilton accompanied by Church visited the Federalists of New England, seeking support for a plan of Federalist voting that purported to reduce Adams to the Vice-Presidency and elect C. C. Pinckney to the Presidency.

• Adams, interpreting the recent election in New York as a repudiation of Hamilton, had rudely discharged two of the former Secretary's devotees, McHenry and Pickering, from the Cabinet. McHenry, in reporting the President's irate dismissal of him, had quoted: "General Washington had saddled him with three Secretaries, Wolcott, Pickering, and myself. . . . I had eulogized General Washington, in my report to Congress, and had attempted in the same report, to praise Hamilton." No one acquainted with the President and his Cabinet had doubted that Timothy Pickering had been deprived of his place because, as Adams later acknowledged, it seemed to the resentful Executive that he "was so devoted an idolater of Hamilton that he could not judge impartially of the sentiments and opinions of the President of the U. States." •

With these things in his mind Hamilton made his Eastern political journey against Adams; but the impressions he received in New England were not without discouragement for him. On his return to New York he wrote to Wolcott: "I have been in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. . . . The leaders of the first class are generally right, but those of the second class are too much disposed to be wrong. It is essential to inform the most discreet of

this description of the facts which denote unfitness in Mr. Adams."

Though beset by fears concerning Jefferson and Adams and the election, Hamilton found delightful interest in furthering the preparation of his country estate. Schuyler, who was generously making a gift of the lumber for the new house, writing in August, 1800, about the Grange and about his grandson's recent distinguished graduation from Columbia, said: "Your favor of the 13th instant with the plan of your intended house was delivered me on Thursday last. . . . I shall . . . soon . . . go up and contract for the timber and purchase the boards and planks. . . . I rejoice, my dear Son, that my Philip has acquitted himself so well, and hope that his future progress may correspond with your and my wishes."

It was in the fall of the year 1800 that Hamilton published his astounding dissertation, *The Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, Esq., President of the United States*—which, through Burr's astuteness, was made to serve a purpose contrary to that intended by its author.

Adams, it seems, had been saying that Hamilton was the head of a British faction in the United States. On August 1, Hamilton wrote him a brief, explicit, courteous letter asking whether he had made the charge and, if so, upon what grounds. The next communication on the subject, sent after two months of ineffectual waiting for a reply to the first, expressed to the President the former Secretary's mind in these terms: "This

much I will affirm, that by whomsoever a charge of the kind mentioned in my former letter, may, at any time, have been made or insinuated against me, it is a base, wicked, and cruel calumny; destitute of even a plausible pretext, to excuse the folly, or mask the depravity which must have dictated it."

These two letters Hamilton included in his pamphlet concerning what seemed to him vanity, jealousy, and incompetence on the part of Adams, which he issued with the intention of giving it a carefully limited circulation that would strengthen Pinckney and weaken the President among certain Federalists. In some mysterious way, however, Burr at once secured a copy of the tract, in order to use it for general publication in the press. This adroit newspaper disclosure, bringing to light the existence of a schism between Federalist leaders, reduced decidedly any probability of success for the campaign of their party.

When it was known that Adams and Pinckney were both defeated and that in the anticipated election by the House of Representatives the Federalist members of the House should have to choose between Burr and Jefferson for President, Hamilton on high ground formed his judgment as to the distressing alternative. "If there be a man in the world I ought to hate," he said, "it is Jefferson. With Burr I have always been personally well. But the public good must be paramount to every private consideration." He felt that Jefferson had "pretensions to character"; he thought Burr "as true a Catiline as ever met in midnight conclave."

But most of the Federalists favored Burr. They regarded him as being only a moderate Republican, and they remembered that he was the grandson of Jonathan Edwards.

Hamilton, in an agony of alarm, sent forth a crusade of letters against the aspirant whom the Federalists were resolved to support. Though the choice that he advocated prevailed eventually, yet before the final vote, electing Jefferson, was taken, Hamilton's advice had been so disregarded by men he was used to leading that he was aware of a sense of alienation from his party. When the contest was over, one of his political associates received from him this remark about it in a letter: "After my ill success hitherto, I ought, perhaps, in prudence, to say nothing further on the subject."

Before learning the result of the historic battle in the House, Hamilton left New York for a business trip to Albany. On the road he wrote to Betsey: "Don't forget to visit the Grange. . . . Leave, in particular charge of Philip, what you cannot yourself accomplish." From a farther place on the journey he assured her: "I have travelled comfortably, and my health is better. Wife, children, and hobby are the only things upon which I have permitted my thoughts to run." He urged: "Don't lose any opportunity which may offer of ploughing up the new garden spot . . . only let the centre of the principal wood in the line of the different rocks remain rough and wild."

In the autumn of 1801, with certain other New York citizens, Hamilton participated in the establishment

of the *Evening Post*. Two militant Federalist editors, both of whom had loyally published his opinions and espoused his cause, in consequence of Republican triumphs had recently retired from the field. They were John Ward Fenno of the *Gazette of the United States* and William Cobbett of *Porcupine's Gazette*.

The proprietors of the *Post* availed themselves of the services of William Coleman, an able Bostonian, who became editor of the new paper. Coleman is reported to have given this account of the collaboration he regularly had from Hamilton: "Whenever anything occurs on which I feel the want of information, I state the matter to him, sometimes in a note. He appoints a time when I may see him, usually a late hour of the evening. He always keeps himself minutely informed on all political matters. As soon as I see him, he begins in a deliberate manner to dictate and I to note down in shorthand; when he stops, my article is completed."

It was in November, 1801, that Hamilton was stricken with the sorrow of an event which, he said, was "beyond comparison the most afflicting" of his life. His beloved son Philip was killed in a duel. George I. Eacker had made a Fourth-of-July speech praising Burr at the disparagement of Hamilton, and one night afterwards Philip and his friend Price, sitting near Eacker at a theatre, ridiculed his speech. Eacker then insulted the lads, each of whom sent a challenge. Both affairs took place at Weehawken Heights. Price, by good fortune, was not injured; but young Hamilton received a mortal wound. The tragedy of his death

was emphasized by the clear evidence he had given of having inherited his father's genius. "The brightest as well as the eldest hope of my family has been taken from me," said Hamilton in oppressive bereavement.

But even in the months of his fresh grief the patriotic champion of Federalism could not remain silent when Jefferson, in the message he transmitted to Congress in December, 1801, recommended that all internal revenue be abandoned, the federal judiciary system changed, and restriction on naturalization abolished.

Hamilton had liked Jefferson's inaugural address, and had expressed his approval of it at the time it was delivered. "We view it," he had admitted in a Federalist appeal regarding a New York election, "as virtually a candid retraction of past misapprehensions, and a pledge to the community, that the new President will not lend himself to dangerous innovations, but in essential points will tread in the steps of his predecessors." After the appearance, however, of the later expression from Jefferson, his December message to Congress, Hamilton asked, in writing as "Lucius Crassus" against the President's recommendations: "What, then, are we to think of the ostentatious assurance in the Inaugural Speech as to the preservation of public faith? Was it given merely to amuse with agreeable but deceptive sounds?" In apprehension he exclaimed, "Alas! how deplorable it will be, should it ever become proverbial, that a President of the United States, like the *Weird Sisters* in *Macbeth*, 'Keeps his



*word of promise to our ear, but breaks it to our hope!"* "

Deep dread agitated Hamilton's mind when he learned that the Judiciary Act of 1801 was to be repealed by Congress, and that Burr continued to gain in favor with the Federalists. Referring to reports of a Federalist celebration in honor of Washington, he wrote one of the Senators from New York: "We are told here, that at the close of your birthday feast, a strange *apparition*, which was taken for the Vice-President, appeared among you, and toasted 'the union of all honest men.' " A few weeks later he wrote to the Senator again, asking: "What meant the *apparition* and the *toast*. . . ? Is it possible that some new intrigue is about to link the Federalists with a man who can never be anything else than the bane of a good cause?"

It was while he was in this mood of distress that Hamilton suggested to C. C. Pinckney a "conference of a small number of leading Federalists" for emergency determinations at the next meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati; and recommended to James A. Bayard, in response to a request for political advice, the formation of a "Christian Constitutional Society" to support the Christian religion and the Constitution; and wrote to Gouverneur Morris: "Mine is an odd destiny. Perhaps no man in the United States has sacrificed or done more for the present Constitution than myself; and contrary to all my anticipations of its fate, as you know from the very beginning, I am still laboring to prop the frail and worthless fabric. Yet I

have the murmurs of its friends no less than the curses of its foes for my reward. . . . Every day proves to me more and more, that this American world was not made for me. . . . You, friend Morris, are . . . by *genius* an exotic. You mistake, if you fancy that you are more of a favorite than myself, or that you are in any sort upon a theatre suited to you."

The Hamiltons, having lived in several houses since their return from Philadelphia,—at 56 Pine Street, 58 Partition Street, Liberty Street near Broadway, and 26 Broadway,—in the summer of 1802 moved into the Grange. "A garden, you know," Hamilton wrote C. C. Pinckney in December, "is a very useful refuge for a disappointed politician. Accordingly, I have purchased a few acres about nine miles from town, have built a house, and am cultivating a garden. The *melons* in your country are very fine. Will you have the goodness to send me some seed, both of the water and musk melons?"

That month Schuyler, confined to Albany by gout, having received a description of the Grange from Stephen Van Rensselaer, said in a letter to Betsey that "the Patroon" spoke of the place "with rapture."

Near the new house the master of the Grange, in patriotic sentiment, planted a circle of thirteen trees.

#### IV

Hamilton watched with interest the experiment of Republican control, and increasingly enjoyed his

country estate. "True happiness," he said to Betsey, "is only to be found in the bosom of one's own family." Also he said to her: "You are very essential to me."

The time he could spend at the Grange was indeed full of pleasure and interest. He continued planting his garden: Pinckney sent the requested seeds from the South, and Dr. David Hosack, who then was making extensive botanical experiments, generously donated cuttings and bulbs. Himself an amateur painter, Hamilton collected works of art for his new house—prints, engravings, etchings, and a set of Mantegna's *chiaroscuro* of the "Triumph of Cæsar." His home was frequently visited by friends, and he and Betsey were often in society, attending balls, the theatre, the philharmonic entertainments at Snow's Hotel. His children—of whom there were seven surviving—afforded him hearty delight: he taught them, read to them, and like a boy joined in their games. One of his young cousins, Robert Hamilton of the Grange in Scotland, he had received at his house; and concerning Robert's brother, Alexander, then a prisoner of war in Paris, he wrote Talleyrand a letter in which, after describing his kinsman as "a Scotch gentleman of education and literary acquirements," he earnestly said, "If your interposition can procure for him any facility, indulgence, or favor, it will confer a personal obligation."

Having such surroundings as were about him at the Grange, Hamilton thought that notwithstanding his weakened health he might "yet live twenty years." Accordingly he planned a great work of thought and scholarship. He unfolded this plan to his friend Kent,

a visitor at the Grange, who described it as contemplating a "full investigation of the history and science of civil government, and the practical results of the various modifications of it upon the freedom and happiness of mankind."

Hamilton wished, said Kent, "to have the subject treated in reference to past experience, and upon the principles of Lord Bacon's inductive philosophy," and to engage the assistance of others in the enterprise. "I have very little doubt," the erudite Kent declared, "that if General Hamilton had lived twenty years longer he would have rivalled Socrates or Bacon, or any of the sages of ancient or modern times, in researches after truth and in benevolence to mankind. The active and profound statesman, the learned and eloquent lawyer, would probably have disappeared in a great degree before the character of the sage philosopher, instructing mankind by his wisdom and elevating his country by his example." •

Though Hamilton was finding the practice of law irksome,—as always it had been to him,—yet so slight and precarious was his personal fortune and so urgent was his longing for financial independence that he diligently continued with the labors of his profession.

If he had charged fees commensurate with those received by many other lawyers of his city, he would already have been a man of wealth. For his standing as a member of the New York bar was supreme. To him Aaron Burr, even according to the partial biographer of that chief rival of his, "freely conceded the palm of eloquence." The biographer Parton, in judging that



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"the two men were antagonists by nature," further says: "To the strength and fertility of Hamilton's imagination, to his fine rhetorical powers, to his occasional flashes of poetical genius, and to the force of his declamation, Colonel Burr paid the tribute of admiration."

Justice Ambrose Spencer from appreciative memory declared concerning Hamilton as a lawyer: "He argued cases before me while I sat as judge on the Bench. Webster has done the same. In power of reasoning, Hamilton was the equal of Webster; and more than this can be said of no man. In creative power Hamilton was infinitely Webster's superior."

In the year 1804, Hamilton voluntarily served in the celebrated case of the *People vs. Croswell*. The defendant was an editor who had been convicted of libel for having published in his paper, the *Wasp*, an item to the effect that "Jefferson paid Callender for calling Washington a traitor, a robber, a perjurer; for calling Adams a hoary-headed incendiary." Croswell had offered to prove to the court by Callender that Jefferson had done what the published statement alleged, but the Judge, following certain precedents, had ruled that the truth was inadmissible as evidence in a prosecution for libel.

It was on a motion for a new trial that Hamilton, profoundly concerned about the principle involved in the case, appeared before the Supreme Court of New York to argue for Croswell the defendant. The two salient points of his contention were: "That in determining the character of a libel, the truth or falsehood is in the nature of things a material ingredient"; and

"That the doctrine of excluding the truth as immaterial originated in a tyrannical and polluted source, the Court of Star Chamber."

• Hamilton spoke for six hours, and from hearing him Kent, one of the judges, was sure that "he never, in any case at the bar, commanded higher reverence for his principles, or equal admiration of the power and pathos of his eloquence." The finding of the Court represented an equal numerical division of the justices; but the doctrines of Hamilton's speech were at once introduced into the Assembly as a bill, and in time they became the law of New York and, where they had not so obtained before, the law throughout the United States. .

Planning his comprehensive work on government and civilization, and allowing himself somewhat greater leisure than he had before felt he could claim, Hamilton did not again produce sustained writings on political issues.

In 1803, however, he published a brief article, signed "Pericles," on the subject of the cession of Louisiana by Spain to France. Displeased at the change in ownership of the Southern territory, in this article he argued that the Government should "seize at once on the Floridas and New Orleans, and then negotiate." He thought a show of armed strength by the United States would bring France, then "gasping for breath after a tremendous conflict," to a mood of very yielding negotiation. "If the President," he said, "would adopt this course, he might yet retrieve his character, induce the best part of the community to look favor-



ably upon his political career, exalt himself in the eyes of Europe, save the country, and secure a permanent fame. But, for this, alas! Jefferson is not destined."

Early in the year 1804, Burr had come to a realization that his career in national affairs was about to be terminated. He saw that he would not be named on his party's ticket in the general fall election. His policy of seeking the favor of the Federalists had cost him his popularity with the Republicans. Unwilling to resign the Vice-Presidency without having some other post in view, and dreading the humiliation of being discarded by the national caucus of his party, he desired of Jefferson appointment to some position of dignity and eminence. But Jefferson, having lost all faith in his colleague, was more disposed to hinder than to help him. Burr then sought, February, 1804, election as governor of New York. He received a minority nomination of the Republicans of that State—the party's majority candidate being Morgan Lewis.

The Federalists, too discouraged to present a candidate of their own, were generally disposed to vote for Burr. They were not unresponsive to an address of the "Burrites" in which that following emphasized the fact that their candidate was a near descendant of the Reverend presidents Burr and Edwards. But Hamilton, still believing that Burr was "a man of irregular and unsatiable ambition," threw himself into the contest in a determination to defeat the Vice-President's desire for the chief office in New York. By dint of steady work his determination against Burr was made

effective: he swung enough Federalist votes from the minority Republican candidate to elect Lewis.'

It must have been in Burr's memory that often before this New York campaign of 1804, Hamilton had obstructed his preferment. After his election to the Senate in 1791, Burr at succeeding times had been considered for the governorship of New York, recommended for a mission abroad, proposed for a second term in the Senate, urged by President Adams for appointment as brigadier-general, and, above all, supported for the Presidency in the historic tie between him and Jefferson. In all of these instances it was Hamilton who, mainly, had prevented him from high and responsible office. Moreover, Hamilton had never appeared reticent as to his adverse opinions concerning Burr's fitness for leadership in public affairs.

In April of 1804 Dr. Charles D. Cooper, in a letter pertaining to the New York campaign, said that Hamilton had spoken of Burr "as a dangerous man, and who ought not to be trusted." Later, in reiterating this statement, he wrote that he could report "a still more despicable opinion which General Hamilton had expressed of Mr. Burr." This clause of Dr. Cooper's second letter—both communications having been published—Burr, on June 18, made the subject of an exchange of notes that led to the challenge which Hamilton, on June 27, accepted. .

Since Hamilton had cases on hand which he wished to finish in a current term of court, it was after the court adjourned, July 6, that the definite arrangement was made that the duel should be at seven o'clock, the

morning of July 11, at Weehawken on the Jersey shore.

On the Fourth of July, in New York, the Society of the Cincinnati had their annual banquet. Burr was present, and Hamilton, by reason of his office in the Society, presided. The intended affair between the two distinguished men was strictly a secret, and that evening it was remarked by the unsuspecting company that Burr was unusually silent and that Hamilton had never before seemed so merry. He was known to have a good voice for singing; occasionally he sang in public and often at home. There his daughter Angelica—though after the shock of Philip's death her mind was giving evidence of the derangement that was later her fate—frequently played the piano or the harp as her father sang. On this Fourth, before the banquet was over, his companions repeatedly called upon their admired leader for a song. With vibrant voice and in convivial mood he memorably responded to the insistence of his comrades.

Burr had fought a duel, in the summer of 1799, with Hamilton's friend John B. Church; but because of unconventional action at the meeting by Burr's second, Judge Ædanus Burke, the affair had redounded as a farce. Hamilton knew that Burr's encounter with him could not be as his antagonist's former duel had been—that it could not terminate lightly. He felt that, because he was himself averse to taking a life and because Burr's intention was unmistakably grim, his own death was near and inevitable.

In the few days left to him, though maintaining the secrecy the code required and uniformly manifesting

a cheerful spirit in social relations, he finished law cases, and in definite preparation for the probable event of death, made his will, wrote Betsey two letters to be delivered to her later, and framed a statement to the world of his reasons for meeting Burr.

In his will, expressing a fear that a forced sale of his property would not bring an amount sufficient to pay his debts, he spoke of his wife's "patrimonial resources" and appealed to his children to make, if necessary, a further provision for her. "Though conscious," he declared, "that I have too far sacrificed the interests of my family to public avocations . . . yet I trust in their magnanimity to appreciate, as they ought, this my request."

In writing, with tragic pain, to his wife, he assured her that he had earnestly desired to avoid the interview with Burr, and said: "But it was not possible, without sacrifices which would have rendered me unworthy of your esteem. I need not tell you of the pangs I feel from the idea of quitting you, and exposing you to the anguish which I know you would feel. Nor could I dwell on the topic lest it should unman me. . . . Adieu best of wives—best of women. . . . The will of a merciful God must be good. Once more, adieu, my darling, darling wife."

In the statement which was to be published if he should fall in the duel, he gave, as a justification of his having accepted Burr's challenge, the reason: "The ability to be in future useful . . . in those crises of our public affairs which seem likely to happen, would probably be inseparable from a conformity with pub-

lic prejudice in this particular." He said also in this statement: "I have resolved, if our interview is conducted in the usual manner, and it pleases God to give me the opportunity, to reserve and throw away my first fire, and I have thoughts even of reserving my second fire, and thus giving a double opportunity to Col. Burr to pause and reflect." .

On the morning of the 11th Hamilton did take Burr's fire just as he had said he would, and in convulsively falling shot his own pistol wide of any mark. In the barge on the way back to the city, as he began to be conscious again, he saw the weapon case and cautioned: "Take care of that pistol; it is undischarged, and still cocked; it may go off and do harm." When the barge arrived he was taken to the close-by home of his friend William Bayard, near Greenwich Street, where the doctors soon found his wound to be a mortal one. Oliver Wolcott, who hastened there, thus wrote in grief to Mrs. Wolcott: "I have just returned from Mr. Wm. Bayards—where Hamilton is—I did not see him—he suffers great pain—which he endures like a Hero—Mrs. Hamilton is with him, but she is ignorant of the cause of his illness, which she supposes to be spasms—no one dare tell her the truth."

Having received on the 11th, at his request, the ministrations of religion from Bishop Moore and Dr. J. B. Mason, on the 12th of July, 1804, at two in the afternoon, Alexander Hamilton died.

The next day the Common Council of New York resolved: "That the ordinance prohibiting the tolling

of Bells at funerals be on this occasion suspended, and that it be recommended to those who have the charge of the Church Bells in this City, to cause them to be muffled and tolled at proper intervals during the day of his interment." His funeral was on Saturday, the 14th, and while the long procession advanced from J. B. Church's house to old Trinity, minute guns sounded from the Battery and from ships in mourning within the harbor.

^ Gouverneur Morris spoke the eulogy, addressing remarks in turn to the students of Columbia, members of the Cincinnati, gentlemen of the Bar, and fellow-citizens. His remarks, however, were vitiated by inappropriateness. Many of those present must have realized this, and must have been quick to know, when he gratuitously adverted to the poverty in which the dead statesman had left his family, that no sons or daughters had ever received a more sufficing heritage than Hamilton had bequeathed to his children. Such ever was their grateful feeling; and Betsey, throughout her fifty years of widowhood to her death, esteemed herself as having abundant wealth in her most treasured possessions—a sonnet Hamilton had written to her at Morristown, worn near her heart to her last day; her beautiful and understanding memories of him; her limitless wifely pride.

Upon returning from Trinity Church, Morris wrote in his diary: "I find that what I have said does not answer the general expectation." His oration contained apology for the career that was his theme; therefore it had disappointed a bereft citizenry, who knew

that Hamilton was deserving of absolute high praise. Everywhere throughout the country, by voices of both political parties, such praise was expressed. "As a politician," observed a Republican editor, "we did not regard him; but as an exalted genius, as an eloquent, brave, generous, frank, and honourable man, we shall ever lament his loss and revere his memory." The editor of the *Charleston Courier*, a South Carolina Federalist, wrote that even Washington's passing was not so great a loss to the nation as was Hamilton's untimely death. "A colossus of might he stood," declared that Southern writer, "the American commonwealth on his shoulders; with one foot in the vigour of manhood, and the other in the counsel of ripened years."

In a large number of cities and villages memorial services were held. The general sorrow came from depths of gratitude. Many Americans discerned, with true and responsive appreciation, that it was Alexander Hamilton who, by determining aright its initial steps, had achieved success for the new Government. Also, they prophesied that his genius, having been devoted to a high emprise, had brought a cumulative glory to his name.





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